

Hafa Adai!

Man get 30 months in prison for kicking cop, DUI. **PAGE 3**
NMC to push through with campus reconstruction. **PAGE 5**

75¢

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Zero COVID cases right now

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The last individual who tested positive for COVID-19 in the CNMI has already recovered and been released

» Last coronavirus case in NMI recovers

from the Kanoa Resort quarantine site in Susupe. The individual is now back home while being monitored by the Commonwealth Health Center.

See ZERO on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, April 28, 2020**

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	141	3	144
Recovered	128	1	129
Active	7	3	10
Deaths	6*	0	6*

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	14	0	14
Recovered	11	1	12
Active	0	0	0
Deaths	2	0	2

*Total includes a sailor from the USS Theodore Roosevelt

**Guam has three new confirmed positive COVID-19 and one recovered patient, all remaining cases are in isolation. Saipan's last recorded COVID-19 case has recovered and there is no new person under investigation.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

Keeping the spirit of 'Marianas Strong' sturdy



Susan Book's daughter, Georgia, irons the face masks that she had sewn to be given away to whoever needs it in the community.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



The Books have sewn hundreds of masks and gave them to a project called "Guardian Masks" and to volunteers at Saipan Cares for Animals.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Victor Cabrera and his wife, Angel, grow almost everything and they like to experiment with varieties to see what grows best in our climate.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PSS gets \$1M to help troubled students

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The Public School System was recently awarded \$1 million through the Trauma Advise, Student, Advocacy Grant under the National Institute of Health to provide help for

students who've been traumatized by past storms and the current COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Bonnie Pangelinan, PSS associate commissioner for Student and Support Services, PSS received notice last week that they

See PSS on Page 4

Plan is for Trump to shift focus to prospects for the economy

By ZEKE MILLER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON (AP)—After two months of frantic response to the coronavirus, the White House is planning to shift President Donald Trump's public focus to the bur-

geoning efforts aimed at easing the economic devastation caused by the pandemic.

Days after he publicly mused that scientists should explore the injection of toxic disinfectants as a potential virus cure, Trump has now rejected

See PLAN on Page 4

By BEA CABRERA
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CORRESPONDENT

First of three parts

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, that hasn't stopped many people from being generous and from wanting to help. For the people featured in this series, "Marianas Strong" is

just no catchword. They are living it, the embodiment of what makes the CNMI and the greater Marianas strong.

Victor Cabrera

Victor Cabrera got started off on teaching the basics of farming when he was asked by fellow gardeners for some advice and tips in 2013.

Cabrera, who hails from a family of farmers, now teaches "Exploring Agriculture" at Hopwood Middle School.

Cabrera learned the value of responsibility at a young age. "I've

See KEEPING on Page 4

INSIDE



LOCAL

Saipan Tribune looks at where we are now, 45 days after the CNMI went into a quasi-lockdown.

PAGE 2



BUSINESS

After about a month of closure, Paris Croissant Bakery is open once again.

PAGE 11



ASIA

Rumors about North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's ill health confounds global intelligence.

PAGE 13



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Local

Where are we now?

Today, April 29, 2020, marks 45 days since the CNMI went into a quasi-lockdown, when Gov. Ralph DLG Torres ordered the closure of all government offices and all non-essential government functions starting March 15, immediately following the report of positive coronavirus cases in Guam.

The shutdown, made as a precautionary measure against the COVID-19 threat, also resulted in the suspension of all classes in public schools and was soon followed by many businesses closing shop, all international flights suspending flights to the CNMI, many being furloughed or let go from their jobs, and upending the CNMI economy.

Here, *Saipan Tribune* looks at where we are now, 45 days later.

COVID-19 in the CNMI

■ Twelve individuals who have tested positive for coronavirus in the CNMI are now all recovered and released from the Alternative Care Site at Kanoa Resort in Susupe.

■ There has been a total of 14 confirmed COVID-19 cases so far in the CNMI, with two deaths and 12 recoveries. There is no person under investigation at the moment.

■ Mass testing is now in full effect at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

■ As of April 25, the CNMI received 70 ventilators and thousands of personal protective equipment that includes 48,900 masks, 217,000 gloves, 12,725 isolation gowns, face shields, and hazmat suits for doctors, nurses, and first responders.

■ The temporary hospital at the upper parking lot of the Commonwealth Health Cen-

ter, called the Medical Care and Treatment Site, is now ready for use.

■ The Alternative Care Site at Kanoa Resort is still being built and will soon be ready for use in early May.

■ According to Esther Muña, the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer, a Territorial Action Plan is now being finalized. CHCC has already come up with an Emergency Plan for Disasters and any public health emergency. Overall, Muña said preparedness is key to responding. *(Justine Nauta)*

Government initiatives

■ The CNMI remains under a State of Public Health Emergency and a State of Significant Emergency, with directives in place, and strictly implemented throughout the CNMI.

■ Government offices remain close, with the shutdown of all government offices and all non-essential government functions yet to be lifted.

■ Outside essential personnel, all employees of the Commonwealth government's departments and agencies are asked to stay home until further notice. About 400 employees were furloughed, and from the recently-concluded Fiscal Response Summit, 200 more are yet to be furloughed.

■ The Office of the Governor, along with the Department of Finance and the Department of Labor, are working on ensuring that stimulus checks, as well as the pandemic employment

assistance, reach the affected employees, with mid-May as targeted date of distribution.

■ While on shutdown, both the Senate and the House of Representatives have had full sessions.

■ A COVID-19 Task Force is created to provide

over \$3 million loan with the Marianas Public Land Trust to pay off missed employee payrolls.

■ PSS has missed three pay periods since the government shutdown.

■ Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada also signed the

■ PSS continues to distribute meals under the Child Nutrition Program and serves over 10,000 individuals daily. *(Kimberly A. Bautista)*

US District Court for the NMI

■ Civil, criminal, and bankruptcy hearings are being conducted by telephone or video-conference as determined by the presiding judge.

■ Physical access to the District Court, including the Clerk's Office and the Office of Pretrial and Probation, have been temporarily closed to the public until May 15, 2002.

■ Court employees are available by telephone and email from 8am to 5pm on Monday through Friday, other than legal holidays, while they are teleworking during this courthouse closure.

CNMI Judiciary

■ All bail hearings are now conducted in the CNMI Supreme Court at the House of Justice Building or Guma' Hustisia in Susupe. Hearings are limited to the Supreme Court courtroom for now.

■ Effective April 4 through June 5, 2020, judiciary facilities are closed to the public, except for the House of Justice building, Kotten Tinian on Tinian, and Centron Hustisia on Rota. The Judiciary alternate sites are the Marianas Business Plaza in Susupe, Drug Court in Chalan Kanoa, Office of Adult Probation Supervision satellite office in Susupe, and Law Revision Commis-

sion in Susupe.

Commonwealth Ports Authority

■ Still no direct international flights arriving into the CNMI. Skymark Airlines Inc. has extended the suspension of all flight operations between Narita and Saipan until May 31, 2020.

■ The CPA board of directors approved the waiving and giving discounts in the total amount of \$1.22 million in leases for six months to their tenants at the airports and seaports.

■ Starting April 3, Star Marianas Air temporarily suspended its flight services between the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

■ United Airlines suspended all its flights into and out of the CNMI from Guam from April 6 to 30, 2020.

■ Essential personnel report for work. Other department staff go in as needed. Others work from home.

Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

■ The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. is offering a payment deferment or due date extension to allow residential customers up to a one-month utility bill payment to be delayed over a three-month period. Essential employees have been reporting to work. Payment Center in Dandan remains open.

Commonwealth Casino Commission

■ The Commonwealth Casino Commission office in Gualo Rai remains closed until further notice. The commissioners will hold a meeting today, Wednesday, to tomorrow, Thursday. The meeting will be held via video conference. *(Ferdie de la Torre)*



direction and implement all COVID-19 related measures. *(Iva Maurin)*

PSS

■ The Public School System has furloughed nearly 800 of its employees, majority of whom are teachers. PSS administrative and federally funded personnel were exempted.

■ PSS has applied for an

injunction against the central government that is set to be heard in June. Board of Education members, however, decided that they would revisit the injunction after negotiating a way to pay teachers their owed salary.

■ PSS students were finally given enhancement packets starting April 15.

■ Graduation and promotion ceremonies were cancelled.

Businesses keeping their head above the water

By BEA CABRERA
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CORRESPONDENT

Soon after COVID-19 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization last March 11, the CNMI government gave a series of orders that shut down most parts of the CNMI government, with the sole aim to mitigate the spread of the virus.

That immediately spilled over to businesses, with specific requirements on what time they are to be open to the public and how they are supposed to do business—social distancing and such. People were also encouraged to stay and work from home. This led to many businesses implementing either limited work hours or temporary closures.

One businessman told *Saipan Tribune* that 99% of his businesses were down. "We're in a real bad situation," he said.

Saipan Chamber of Com-

merce president Velma Palacios said in an earlier interview that all businesses—large or small—will be impacted by the pandemic. "Take for example, in the CNMI, the hotels, T-Galleria, airlines. Most have to close down or reduce their operations, which affects employees. ...Everyone is trying to see how they can balance both health and safety with surviving in this economy," she said.

She stressed though, that the health and safety of the CNMI community is first and foremost. "...things are unfolding every day, we all have to take it one day at a time. We need to be patient and be flexible as this is all new to us," she added.

That means adapting to a new normal, especially with the announcement of positive cases of COVID-19 on Saipan and if that number continues

to rise. "These circumstances will continue to change the way businesses operate and provide services to the public.

She is grateful for the businesses that have remained open to provide critical services to the community despite the challenges. "As a business owner or executive, it's difficult to decide whether to keep the doors open or close during the chaos. These business managers have to provide for the health and safety of stakeholders, which involves constant worry and strict precautionary measures for the safety and welfare of themselves, their employees, and customers," she added.

AC Pacific LLC president Alex B.K. Youn, who manages I Love Saipan stores and Star Sands Plaza, said that providing for the local community is always an important fac-

tor in their business portfolio.

"We have an outlet store on Middle Road for the local market and we are expanding our product lines and offering more discounted products on packaged food products. ...Our business is not making enough sales to meet the breakeven point, but we have the three stores open because we have to keep our employees on the payroll and at the same time give service to the community," he said.

After 45 days, businesses that have remained open are still thriving, like The Shack, Tom Yum Restaurant, Wild Bill's, Salty's, Poki Yaki, Oink, KFC/Taco Bell, Spicy Thai, Ina's Kitchen, Naked Fish, and Sunny Side Café, to name a few. Some businesses are starting to open one by one after regaining their confidence.

Saipan Mango Six manager Sun Moon Ahn said that they temporarily closed in order to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. "We used those times researching how to solve the safety problems of customers and employee...noticing that the pandemic situation here on Saipan has been a little safer and well-controlled by the government. We considered the requests of many of our regular customers to open and that is why we are ready to serve once again."

Island favorite Shirley's Coffee Shop re-opened its doors for take-out two weeks ago after a month of hiatus. Paris Croissant Bakery in Garapan opened its doors yesterday. "It has been a month since we closed and we are opening once again as things seem to get better," manager Youngmin Choi said.

The pandemic also created platforms for new businesses in the CNMI like Eats Easy, Island Ride, and Saipan Go that offers food, goods, and service deliveries.

Palacios commends businesses that are operational and believes these businesses are providing a great public service right now. "They understand their role in providing critical products and services for families during these difficult times. Many of their employees would have better peace of mind if they were able to self-quarantine and work from home. But not everyone is fortunate to do so, as keeping the business operational for at least some hours provides for our collective livelihoods," she said. "We thank these businesses and their employees who continue to provide services to the community and ensure their customers are safe."

Man get 42 months in prison for kicking cop, DUI

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

A habitual offender was slapped Monday with three years and six months' imprisonment for kicking a police officer who tried to arrest him and for driving while under

the influence of alcohol.

Peter John Aldan Blas, 29, pleaded guilty to resisting arrest, assault and battery, disturbing the peace, and DUI and was sentenced to the maximum of three years and six months, with the first 18 months to be served without the possibil-

ity of parole, probation, and work release. He was given credit for time served. After his prison term, Blas will be placed on supervised probation for three years. He was ordered to pay a \$1,000 fine, \$25 in court cost, and probation fee of \$120 per year.

Blas was also ordered to perform 300 hours of community service. His driver's license was suspended for 30 days. He is barred from drinking alcohol or using controlled substances. He will be subjected to random drug testing during his probation.

As part of the plea deal, all other charges against Blas were dropped.

According to the police, Blas kicked the legs of a Department of Public Safety police officer and pulled his arms away when the officer tried to arrest him on Nov. 20, 2019. Blas also repeatedly shouted profanities and challenged the police officer to a fight.

In the DUI case, Blas was found with a Blood Alcohol Concentration over the legal limit of 0.08 as measured by breath test on Aug. 18, 2018.

Assistant public defender Karie Comstock served as counsel for Blas. Assistant attorney general Samantha Vickery appeared for the government through video at the hearing at the Supreme Court courtroom.

Contractor's lien application on IPI's hotel-casino project denied

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

U.S. District Court for the CNMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona denied as untimely yesterday the application for a mechanic's lien filed by a contractor on Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's hotel-casino project and on the land that it sits on.

A mechanic's lien refers to a security interest in the title to a property for the benefit of those who have supplied labor or materials that improve the property.

Manglona said that Pacific Rim Land Development LLC sat on its rights, and consequently lost the opportunity to obtain a mechanic's lien.

She said mechanic's lien statutes are designed to protect contractors and suppliers of construction materials by providing a unique remedy in

cases of non-payment by owners of construction projects. However, the judge said, the right to a mechanic's lien is subject to filing deadlines that are strictly enforced to protect the rights of third parties from unknown encumbrances on property.

In the CNMI, Manglona said, these deadlines are triggered by completion or abandonment of contracted work. "Contractors know when and how they have performed and they know when their bills go unpaid," she said.

Moreover, the judge said, the CNMI mechanic's lien statute incorporates a notice requirement for the shorter 60-day filing period, as compared to the generous year plus 60-day deadline in cases without valid notice.

"It is not unjust to require a contractor who knows all the facts necessary to trig-

ger a filing deadline to file a timely application," Manglona pointed out.

Manglona held probable cause hearings on Pacific Rim's application on Dec. 29, 2019, and Feb. 11, 2020.

According to court records, Pacific Rim and IPI entered into a construction contract on Feb. 13, 2018, for the Pacific Rim to build a hotel-casino complex in Garapan. Pacific Rim eventually stopped working on the project because it says that IPI did not pay it the amounts owed under the contract. The parties then executed a notice of mutual termination on Sept. 21, 2018. On the same day, IPI executed a promissory note in favor of Pacific Rim for \$11.3 million, which provided for a payment schedule over the next nine months, with the entire amount to be paid on or before June 15, 2019.

One year after the two agreements were signed, Pacific Rim sued IPI for breach of contract and breach of promissory note, saying that IPI owes it \$5.65 million. On Nov. 19, 2019, Pacific Rim filed an application for a mechanic's lien.

After a series of motions, Pacific Rim filed a second amended complaint and second amended application for a mechanic's lien on Dec. 12, 2019.

IPI, through counsel, opposed the lien application, arguing that it is untimely.

In her order denying Pacific Rim's application, Manglona said the CNMI's mechanic's lien statute provides two methods to determine the deadline for filing a lien application, both of which are calculated from the date of completion of the work on the improvement.

Pacific Rim argued that

the term "completion" means completion of the entire project, while IPI argued that it means completion of the contracted work at issue in the lien application.

Manglona said using Pacific Rim's definition, the clock for filing has not yet started as the hotel-casino complex is not yet substantially completed or abandoned.

If IPI's interpretation is correct, then Pacific Rim's application is time-barred under the first method of calculating the filing deadline, Manglona said.

Even if Pacific Rim had not substantially completed all work under the contract by that date, it was released from those obligations and allowed to abandon the project, the judge said. Therefore, the timeframe for filing a lien application turns on the Sept. 30, 2018 completion date.

"The fact that the entire casino construction project is not

yet completed or abandoned is irrelevant," Manglona said.

On the question of timeliness of Pacific Rim's application, Manglona said the CNMI mechanic's lien statute provides two methods of calculating the filing deadline for a lien application, one with delivery of a valid notice of completion and one without notice.

Manglona said the notice of mutual termination provided proper notice to Pacific Rim that its obligations under the contract were complete.

The judge said she finds that it is a valid notice of completion and, pursuant to the statute, the timeframe for Pacific Rim to file a mechanic's lien application expired on Nov. 29, 2018, 60 days after delivery.

She noted that Pacific Rim filed a lien application with the court on Nov. 19, 2019, with the present application filed on

See IPI on Next Page

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The advertisement features a hand holding a smartphone that displays the Saipan Tribune website. The website shows various local news articles, including one about a 'Three ways to get your sauce on' promotion and another about a 'CONTESTANT' search. In the background, a laptop also displays the website, and a printed copy of the Saipan Tribune newspaper is visible, showing a headline about a 'Hafa Adali' event and a '75¢' price tag. The overall theme is promoting advertising opportunities across multiple platforms.

Planned policies to set direction

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

The first CNMI Fiscal Response Summit yesterday ended on a pragmatic note: Despite many disagreements, all in the community represents “One Commonwealth,” and everyone has to move forward together and address all differences along the way.

Leaders on the island—from all three branches of the government as well as the private sector—digitally congregated for days to discuss and carve out policy plans, in a collective effort to correct and improve the direction of the CNMI fiscally, and set the tone for the next three years.

The economic standing of the CNMI was at the forefront of the discussion and, according to Gov. Ralph

DLG Torres, issues raised during the discussions included over-expenditure, travel, accountability, positions that need to be audited, and the right-sizing of the government.

‘Right time but difficult’

The governor disclosed that the fiscal summit gave rise to decisions that are difficult but necessary, in order for the CNMI to move forward.

“None of us want to furlough anyone, but at the same time we have to live within our means. ... We’ve furloughed already close to 400 employees. ... Unfortunately, more needs to be done,” the governor said, as he talked about measures that had been done and those that are yet to be implemented.

“We can sit here all day and blame each other, or we address and we ac-

knowledge where are we at today, what are we facing, but more importantly, where do we go from here,” he added.

The overarching goal is to have the right number of employees, to ensure that the government obligation to provide safety, health, and education will continue to move forward.

“This is one Commonwealth, one direction, and one community. A lot of the decisions that’s been made, I’m sure that each one of us had some reservations or total disagreement, but at the end of the day, what is the most critical part is how do we move forward,” he said. “We have a lot of things that we need to move forward and address—there’s tax structure, annual leave, rebate, or the community chest funds.”

With legislations needed for the planned policies, Torres said he wants to continue to work with Speaker Blas Jonathan Attao (R-Saipan) and

all the members of the House of Representatives, Senate President Victor B. Hocog (R-Rota) and the senators, as well as the Judiciary.

The governor also proposed a timeline—on May 14, July 14, and Sept. 14—for continued discussions and implementations to be made, based on the plans that the government has set, and

was advised to do, during the summit.

“I hope that every time we meet, there is progress on both sides in making sure that we address the concerns, that, after this summit, there won’t be bloated government, that there won’t be over-expenditure on travel or other expenditures, and there is complete accountability.”

KEEPING

From Page 1

been farming alongside my parents and siblings since I was very young. My father was a certified horticulturist and farmer. ... Farming and being self-sufficient have always been a part of our culture. ... Growing up, many of my friends farmed after school and on the weekends and there were many local farmers on island who helped build the farmer’s market co-op,” he said.

“I wanted to bring that back and lower our dependence on imported goods. I want people to get back into the habit of subsistence farming. ... I want people to be addicted to producing food. ... They don’t have to be self-sufficient but at least supplement some of the produce they buy with things they can grow very easily,” he added.

Besides agriculture, Cabrera is also into apiculture, and he is a willing teacher to anyone who is willing to learn and pursue a hobby in beekeeping.

Since this COVID-19 social distancing thing started, Cabrera and his wife, Angel, have started making YouTube video tutorials called “Saipan Supplemental Gardening,” where they hope to share their knowledge of gardening with others who would like to start their own little garden.”

“Other than YouTube tutorial videos, I don’t really offer classes but I would like those that view our channel or meet with us in person to walk away feeling motivated and ready to try gardening for themselves. I want people to not be afraid of gardening and failing but use those mistakes made as lessons to improve their technique,” he added.

Cabrera and his wife grow almost everything, from herbs and vegetables, to fruits, and they like to experiment with varieties to see what grows best in Saipan’s climate.

“I hope the people we meet and talk to, as well as those who watch our channel, to share what they learned with their family and friends so that more and more people are able to produce more goods. I want them to have a sense of motivation and willingness to try new things in terms of gardening and not be held back by making mistakes,” he said.

“My favorite moments are when people share pictures of the garden they have started on social media because their excitement and pride in their work is something I find priceless and it is better than a pat in the

back or a certificate of participation. Knowing and seeing that another family is growing some of their own food is a good start because I know based on personal experience that it will slowly increase in size and I also know that they will end up sharing their produce with family and friends, which means more people will become interested in learning and starting their own gardens,” he added.

Susan Book

Isla Montessori teacher Susan Book, together with her two daughters, Georgia and Jaxon, have sewn hundreds of face masks for the community for free.

“This started as a project with Georgia. She received a sewing machine for Christmas and we hadn’t had time for real lessons yet. We pulled it out and looked up a template for a mask and around the same time, I saw Rep. Sheila Babauta’s post about her idea for Guardian Masks. I immediately reached out to her as we had fabric to donate and we could also sew,” she said.

“In times like these, there is always a feeling of ‘What can we do for others?’ in my family. How can we share with those that are in need? It was ingrained in me from childhood. You always help your neighbors and when you have plenty you share and it was also a way of feeling purposeful. That was what I enjoyed seeing in my daughter. From being sad and upset about the changes happening, she found a purpose, she was helping and, as she lined up the masks she made, she said, ‘I did that,’” she added.

When people wear their handmade masks, Book wants them to think of safety, community, and a feeling of solidarity. “Again, it’s a sense of purpose, a feeling that we are still making a difference in our community even if we are distant. I also love seeing a finished product. ... We did a special batch for Saipan Cares for Animals. I had just posted on Facebook that we were sewing and I was made aware that they had posted a need, so we made a special batch for those that are caring for Saipan animals during this time,” she said.

“I just love seeing my daughter’s sense of community and for her to see her efforts as valued. She is almost 10 and is at an age where she will remember and she wants to make a difference. She called her friend the other day wanting specifics for what kind of mask, color, etc. that she could make for her. Could this be the new friendship bracelets?”

IPI

From Page 3

Dec. 12, 2019.

With respect to Pacific Rim’s lawsuit, Manglona entered a judgment last Thursday in the amount of \$5.65 million in favor of Pacific Rim and against

IPI as to the claim of breach of contract.

Manglona finds that there is no just reason for delay of the entry of judgment on Pacific Rim’s claim for breach of contract on the promissory note.

IPI recently filed counterclaims against Pacific Rim, accusing it of hiring nonprofessionals to work on IPI’s casino-resort project in Garapan.

PLAN

From Page 1

the utility of his daily task force briefings, where he has time and again clashed with scientific experts. Trump’s aides are aiming to move the president onto more familiar — and safer, they hope — ground: talking up the economy, in tighter controlled settings.

It’s a political imperative as allies have seen an erosion in support for the president. What had been his greatest

asset in the reelection campaign, his ability to blanket news headlines with freewheeling performances, has become a daily liability. At the same time, new Republican Party polling shows Trump’s path to a second term depends on the public’s perception of how quickly the economy rebounds from the state-by-state shutdowns meant to slow the spread of the virus.

Some states have started to ease closure orders, and Trump is expected to begin to highlight his administration’s work in helping busi-

nesses and employees. Aides said the president would hold more frequent roundtables with CEOs, business owners and beneficiaries of the trillions of dollars in federal aid already approved by Congress, and begin to outline what he hopes to see in a future recovery package.

Trump last left the White House grounds a month ago, and plans are being drawn up for a limited schedule of travel within the next few weeks, aide said. It would be a symbolic show that the nation is beginning to reopen.

PSS

From Page 1

were awarded \$1 million under the TASA Grant, which they applied for back in February.

“We received the notice [last Tuesday] that we were awarded the Project TASA Grant. We will begin working on mental health training and support as soon as we access the funds,” she said.

Pangelinan explained that the grant is for 18 months and would go to mental health support for students, teachers, and families.

“This is a \$1-million grant for 18

months and, as soon as the funds are accessible, we can begin some support for teachers, families, and students on some of the trauma that they have been experiencing and our efforts to increase mental health,” she said.

Pangelinan added that it is perfect timing to be awarded this grant since families are still recovering from Super Typhoon Yutu while also facing the COVID-19 pandemic. “It’s more than timely considering the crisis we’ve encountered like the storms and this so that is something we’re very happy to have been awarded,” she said.

Pangelinan said PSS is also working on a grant application that would

secure it \$5 million but she did not mention what the grant is for.

“We are submitting another grant for \$5 million for five years with no cost sharing. We’re looking forward to a favorable response with that as well,” she said.

Currently, PSS is also awaiting over \$12 million from the U.S. Department of Labor under the CARES Act. Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada said the funds are expected to be transferred directly to PSS’ account around May or June.

The funding from the CARES Act would be used to pay off the last three missed payrolls for PSS personnel that is worth about \$1.8 million.

ZERO

From Page 1

Press secretary Kevin Bautista confirmed that, as of yesterday, April 27, there is no persons under investigation in the CNMI. This means that there is currently no positive COVID-19 case in the Commonwealth.

Additionally, Esther Muña, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer, said that all Commonwealth Health Center personnel have tested negative for COVID-19. Muña said it was a relief to see all the tests came back negative.

Dee, who agreed to speak on the condition that she not be identified, is relieved that the last person who was positive for coronavirus has now recovered. “I’m relieved because my parents have multiple health conditions and now I don’t have to really worry as much as I did once the first couple of cases were announced,” she said.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and the Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force

will continue their efforts on community-based testing and will coincide with efforts to reopen the economy as they discussed during yesterday’s Fiscal Response Summit closing plenary session. Keeping public health in mind will mandate how the government will open up the economy in phases and how they will implement the changes to the CNMI’s fiscal structure, Bautista said.

“The goal is to be COVID-19-free and ensure that our government and economy can safely reopen to generate revenue,” she added. “Federal assistance is well on its way, and we look forward to making sure the Marianas gets relief it needs during this pandemic.”

Although there is no active case right now, Muña advised that everyone still has to be cautious.

Torres and the Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force continue to work on other precautionary measures to make sure there’s no second wave of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases.

As of April 28, there have been a to-

tal of 14 confirmed positive cases in the CNMI. Two have died and 12 others have recovered and released while being advised to continue practicing good hygiene and social distancing.

COVID-19 in Guam

The Department of Public Health and Social Services tested 38 individuals for COVID-19 on Monday, April 27. Two tested positive through DPHSS and 36 tested negative.

According to the Joint Information Center in Guam, one additional case tested positive through the U.S. Naval Hospital Guam and was reported earlier yesterday.

The DPHSS overall count also includes probable cases of COVID-19 and confirmed positive cases tested by the Naval Health Research Center in San Diego, California, the Guam Memorial Hospital Authority, the Guam National Guard, and Diagnostic Laboratory Services.

To date, Guam has 144 confirmed case, with five deaths, and 128 released from isolation.

NMC to push through with campus reconstruction



Before the COVID-19 pandemic, majority of the students of the Northern Marianas College had classes at these tents built in front of the college's ruined gymnasium in As Terlaje.

JAYVEE VALLEJERA

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Despite the current economic downturn and COVID-19

pandemic, the Northern Marianas College continues with its plan to build new, resilient campus buildings.

According to NMC interim

president Frankie Eliptico, NMC intends to push through with construction plans despite the economic difficulties the CNMI is facing.

"NMC is moving forward with the design and construction of new classrooms and student facilities that are resilient, energy efficient, technologically enhanced, and designed to meet the current and future learning needs of the CNMI," he said in an email message.

Eliptico said discussion continues to determine a way to accelerate the construction of the facilities, considering that they already received a federal grant of \$21.9 million to rebuild. "The college has already secured federal

grants, including one from the U.S. Department of Education for \$21.9 million that will be used toward new buildings. Some demolition and construction activities have been scheduled this summer, and we're in discussion to determine how we can accelerate those activities in light of COVID-19 restrictions," he said.

NMC is also working on securing other grants to contribute to the college's recovery from Super Typhoon Yutu. Majority of the college's buildings at its As Ter-

laje campus were destroyed in the typhoon.

"We are also working to confirm other grants and resources that will contribute the college's recovery from Super Typhoon Yutu and the current pandemic, which has been declared a major disaster for the CNMI," Eliptico said.

Recently, NMC received \$1.8 million from the U.S. Department of Education under the CARES Act. A portion of the funds have already been disbursed to students whose lives and education were impacted by COVID-19.

SSI recipients, act now

Supplemental Security Income recipients who don't file tax returns will start receiving their automatic Economic Impact Payments directly from the Treasury Department in early May. People receiving SSI benefits who did not file 2018 or 2019 taxes, and have qualifying children under age 17, however, should not wait for their automatic \$1,200 individual payment. They should immediately go to the IRS's webpage at www.irs.gov/coronavirus/non-filers-enter-payment-info-here and visit the *Non-Filers: Enter Your Information* section to provide their information. SSI recipients

who have dependent children and did not file 2018 or 2019 taxes need to act by Tuesday, May 5, in order to receive additional payments for their eligible children quickly.

By taking this step to enter information on the IRS website about them and their qualifying children, they will also receive the \$500 per dependent child payment in addition to their \$1,200 individual payment. If people in this group do not provide their information to the IRS soon, their payment at this time will be \$1,200 only. They would then be required to file a tax year 2020 tax return to obtain the additional \$500 per

eligible child.

"I urge SSI recipients with qualifying children and who do not normally file taxes to take action now. Immediately go to IRS.gov so that you will receive the full amount of the Economic Impact Payments you and your family are eligible for," said Social Security Commissioner Andrew Saul in a statement yesterday. "Lastly, a word of caution. Be aware of scams related to the Economic Impact Payments. There is no fee required to receive these payments. Don't be fooled."

Visit the agency's COVID-19 web page at www.socialsecurity.gov/coronavirus/ for important information and updates." (PR)

BOH Foundation donates \$35K to food banks

HONOLULU, Hawaii—To help address the expanding food insecurity in communities affected by COVID-19, Bank of Hawaii Foundation donated \$35,000 to food banks and distribution services in Guam and Saipan.

Bank of Hawaii Foundation donated \$15,000 to the Salvation Army Guam Corps; \$10,000 to Catholic Social Service Food Bank in Guam; and \$10,000 to The Salvation Army Saipan Corps.

"The school closures and job disruptions caused by COVID-19 have created an urgent need for the services of our local food banks in the communities we serve," said Erlinda Alegre, senior vice president and market executive of Bank of Hawaii's West Pacific Region branch banking. "We are pleased to support the Salvation Army and Catholic Social Service in the essential work they do [in] Guam and [on] Saipan to make sure that no one goes hungry."

The Salvation Army Guam Corps and Saipan Corps are

providing emergency response efforts in every community where they minister. Bank of Hawaii Foundation's donations will help them meet the increasing needs for emergency food boxes on Guam and Saipan. What the Salvation Army used to distribute in a month, they now distribute in a single day. The donations will also help the Salvation Army provide meals-to-go for front-line nursing staff who are treating and testing CO-

VID-19 patients across Guam.

Lisa Bordallo, Catholic Social Service marketing/client services manager, said, "As one of only two food pantries [in] Guam, our services provide critical relief during disasters such as the current pandemic. We assist all in need, including those who have lost their jobs and other means of feeding their families. *Si yu'us ma'ase* for your generous support of our mission to end hunger and reduce poverty." (PR)

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
RFP20-CHCC/FACILITIES-003

NEW SUBMISSION DEADLINE: APRIL 30, 2020 TIME: 10:00 AM

"FIRE RATED DOOR REPLACEMENT & NEW INSTALLATION"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)/INVITATION TO BID (ITB) FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE (WWW.CHCC.GOV.MP). ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO RFP'S TAB ON THE BOTTOM NAVIGATION BAR. CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP/ITB. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

***MANDATORY ASSESSMENT ON APRIL 14, 2020**
@ 9:00 A.M. SAIPAN TIME @ THE CHCC FACILITY/MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT.

/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
CHCC DIRECTOR OF P&S



NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE PUBLIC NOTICE

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration (EDA) is considering a request for Federal assistance from Northern Marianas College (NMC) to construct two on-campus facilities in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), EDA is conducting an assessment of the potential of the proposed project to affect the environment and/or historic properties.

The project involves construction of two new facilities on the northeast corner of the NMC campus in As Terlaje, Saipan:

The Workforce Development and Training Center would consist of a 3-story building with about 20,200 square feet of floor space and a building footprint of approximately 65 feet by 105 feet, housing classrooms, laboratories, and faculty offices.

The Center for Research, Extension, and Development would consist of a 2-story building with about 25,000 square feet of floor space and a building footprint of approximately 80 feet by 160 feet, housing laboratories, a multi-purpose room, and administrative and program offices.

Project information is available for review via e-mail request by contacting Mr. William Torres at william.torres@marianas.edu or Ms. Patricia Coleman at patricia.coleman@marianas.edu

If you have any information regarding potential impacts environmental resources or historic properties associated with this proposed project, please provide it in writing to:

Regional Environmental Officer
US Department of Commerce
Economic Development Administration
915 Second Avenue, Room 1890
Seattle, WA 98174
rdimmick@eda.gov

Comments received in the EDA Regional Office by 5:00 pm Pacific Time on May 20, 2020 will be considered. A copy of the NEPA/NHPA decisional document will be available upon request at the above EDA Regional Office.



STILL CLOSED FOR BUSINESS

Forty-five days since the CNMI went into a quasi-lockdown, many businesses remain closed and these pictures of many closed doors are telling a story of economic devastation for many families and the CNMI economy itself.

KRIZEL TUAZON

COVID-19 testing for all government employees eyed

By IVA MAURIN

iva_maurin@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres is encouraging all government employees to get tested for COVID-19.

With test kits now in the CNMI, along with the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s capability to conduct on-island testing, the COVID-19 Task Force is now working on guidelines for testing for gov-

ernment employees.

This comes as first responders, doctors and nurses, and other health care professionals go through testing, and as the task force rolled out the drive-thru commu-

nity testing yesterday.

In a separate interview, Torres said it has yet to be decided whether to make the test mandatory for all government employees, but that they will come around to get

tested eventually.

"We are we are working on it, whether it's mandatory or not. But I do want to encourage all of our government employees, especially those that are dealing with customers on

a one-on-one basis," he added.

Torres, who went through COVID-19 testing himself, also added that he will undergo COVID-19 testing again just as soon as the CNMI Fiscal Response Summit ends.

Lions Clubs extends a helping hand once more

By JUSTINE NAUTA

justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Individuals who benefited from the donation poses with the bowl noodles and butane that the Lions Clubs International distributed last April 25.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Lions Clubs International District 204, Region 2 members donated food and supplies last April 25 to 86 families in the CNMI, most of whom are experiencing income loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each beneficiary received a case of cup noodles and a pack of butane.

According to a Lions Clubs statement, the assistance was extended not just to foreign workers, but to other nationalities as well.

The donations were made possible with the help of Lions members from Guam, District Gov. Fely Angel, zone chair Blanca Imbo, assistant cabinet secretary Rose Moore, and from Saipan Fil-Am Lions Club members Jean Pumotong, Socorro Huliganga, and Mario Mayuga.

"Kindness and generosity,

in times like these, really matters," said Annamae Adaza, region 2 chairperson.

Earlier this month, the Lions Clubs also assisted 30 families by giving out \$35 vouchers that could be used to purchase food and other necessities. Twenty Kentucky Fried Chicken meals were also distributed to people in Chalan Kanoa who have been staying in tents since Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018.

The District 204, Region 2 is composed of six clubs: Saipan Fil-American Lions Club, Saipan Unity LC, Saipan Marianas LC, Saipan Alliance LC, Saipan Natibu LC, and Saipan Centennial LC. Each club is autonomous. Additionally, clubs can create their own fundraising and projects and the six clubs can work as one, as a Region 2. To learn more about Lions Clubs International, you can visit their website: www.lionsclubs.org.

UFO donates relief goods to families

By JUSTINE NAUTA

justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The United Filipino Organization-CNMI Inc. has finished giving away relief goods to families severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to UFO president Marcelo Masilungan, the organization's representatives began distributing the food donations since Good Friday and, so far, a total of 1,000 bags of 10- and 20-lb rice and assorted canned goods have been given away.

Care packages were delivered door-to-door in As Teo, San Roque, San Antonio, and Koblerville. According to Masilungan, it didn't matter if the beneficiary was a U.S. citizen or not.

"We would like to thank our business partners, Karidat Social Services CNMI, LBC Express (Saipan), Mr. and Mrs. Tony and Annie Reyes, Ms. Liza Taylor, and to some anonymous sponsor for their continuous support for UFO by helping [us] provide for the community," said Masilungan.

This wasn't the first time that the UFO came together to extend a helping hand. UFO members also donated to those affected by the Taal Volcano eruption in the Philippines.

"I think that a little goes a long way, whether you want to donate 50 cents or \$1. Every single penny counts. We can help a lot of families with that," he said.

He assured that those who helped distribute the donations followed social distancing and hygiene rules.



A member of the Jesus Is Lord Church poses with Marcelo Masilungan, United Filipino Organization president, after receiving eight bags of rice and assorted canned goods in San Vicente.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



The United Filipino Organization donated 1,000 bags of rice and assorted canned goods to families who were heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



A beneficiary poses with United Filipino Organization members after receiving a bag of rice and assorted canned goods at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort in Kagman.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

NMC Nursing Program accepting applications for fall 2020 cohort

Students who are interested in pursuing a career in nursing can apply to become part of the Northern Marianas College Nursing Department's newest cohort in the fall 2020 semester. Those who meet the program's requirements can submit their application before Friday, May 22, 2020.

The selection of students will be based on the following criteria: cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher; completion of all nursing and general education prerequisites with a grade of "C" or higher; the ability to understand, speak

and write in English; and a passing score in the program's entrance exam.

The number of students selected will also depend on the number of faculty available to teach the class. At this time, the class size will be limited to 30 students. If there is not enough space for all applicants, a wait list will be established.

Students are advised to make an appointment with their nursing advisor via email as soon as possible to discuss prerequisites and transcripts in order to deter-

mine current standing and progress toward meeting eligibility requirements.

Selection of cohort participants will be completed before August 2020. A notification letter will be sent to each applicant using the address designated on the application. Application forms may be downloaded from www.marianas.edu.

For more information, contact the NMC Nursing Department via email at andrew.mendiola@marianas.edu or rosa.aldan@marianas.edu. (NMC)

Opinion

Hafa Adair

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

No time to lose resolve in fight against coronavirus

We continue to learn that what we don't know about the novel coronavirus eclipses what we do know.

That was reinforced last week in California's Bay Area with separate findings for Santa Clara County indicating that the infection rate is higher than first thought; that more people have died from COVID-19 than previously known; and that the nation's first death occurred here on Feb. 6, suggesting the virus could have been circulating in the United States as far back as December.

The findings add more information as medical experts struggle with limited data to determine the infection rate and lethality of COVID-19, warn against premature reopening of the nation, and work furiously to find treatments and a vaccine.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump swings wildly from words of caution to calls for civil disobedience while lacing his daily briefings with his personal, unscientific musings about the longevity of the virus and his reckless prescriptions for combating it.

As a result on Friday: Georgia's governor, against the advice of public health experts, began rapidly reopening his state for businesses, something the president at first supported and then criticized. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned against use of a drug, which Trump has been touting, outside a hospital setting or a clinical trial due to risk of heart rhythm problems. And the makers of Clorox and Lysol felt compelled to issue warnings against ingesting bleach and other disinfectants.

Fortunately, most state officials across the country are ignoring Trump and listening to the medical experts. Unfortunately, some are not. And, as we know all too well, the coronavirus does not respect city, state or national boundaries.

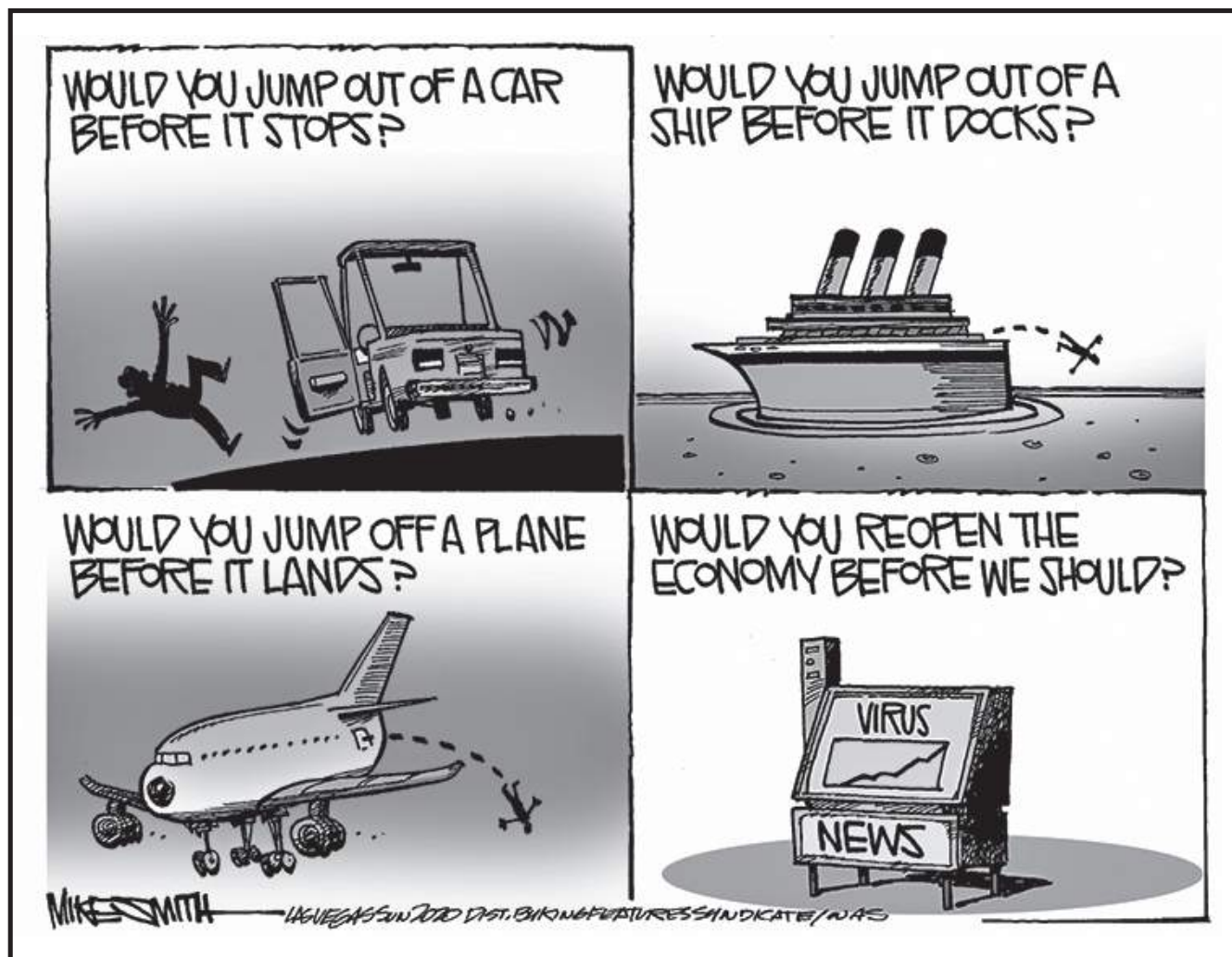
It's clear, despite Trump's wishful, politically motivated thinking to the contrary, that the fight against coronavirus will almost certainly continue for the rest of this year. The more we distance, the greater the likelihood that we can tamp down the severity.

What we don't know is how pervasive the spread will be nor how deadly the disease will prove. We know that it's highly contagious and transmitted by people regardless of whether they show symptoms of their infections.

We don't even know how widely the disease has already disseminated or how many people have already died from it. The Santa Clara County findings add new data points but probably don't change the underlying point that the virus is more deadly and more contagious than the seasonal flu.

We probably won't know the true death rate until the

See **CORONAVIRUS** on Next Page



Boris Johnson's scientists are on tap, not on top

As Boris Johnson returns to politics this week, he faces what may be the biggest decision of his political life: how and when to ease lockdown restrictions.

Speaking in front of Downing Street on Monday morning, the British prime minister said that as he weighs the next steps, "We will be relying as ever on the science to inform us, as we have from the beginning." But a firestorm over the inner workings of the scientific body advising the government on its response to the deadly coronavirus is colliding with growing pressure, especially from Johnson's own supporters, to move quickly to restart the economy. The two pressures are inextricably linked.

Navigating them will call for Johnson to act decisively and transparently to maintain public trust during the worst crisis the country has faced since World War II. Johnson's message Monday married his trademark optimism with both the humility and caution of a leader who has just spent a month in a personal battle with what he called "an unexpected and invisible mugger."

He also promised that future decisions will be taken "with the maximum possible transparency." That is long overdue and one way he can demonstrate success is by shining a light on the workings of his key scientific advisory committee.

Since the coronavirus outbreak arrived in the U.K., Johnson and his Cabinet colleagues have hammered home that they are being "guided by the science." It is meant to be reassuring in a doctor-knows-best kind of way. But membership of the government's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, or SAGE, has been kept secret. And revelations — published in the Guardian newspaper on Friday — that Johnson's closest political adviser took part have thrown its advice into question.

Almost predictably, the man in the middle of the latest furor is Dominic Cummings. There is no more controversial figure in British politics. The prime minister's studiously enigmatic adviser, memorably portrayed by Benedict Cumberbatch in the TV film on the Brexit campaign, was the mastermind behind the Brexit campaign and then of Johnson's resounding December election victory.

Cummings has only seemed to accrue more power, and mystique, since then. Depending on whom you speak to, Cummings is admired, feared, despised or viewed with any combination of the three.

His presence at meetings has provoked a violent reaction. Richard Horton, editor of the Lancet medical journal, who has been a critic of both the government's response and those advising it, called on the SAGE scientific experts to resign immediately if the report is true: "You have forfeited any claim you might have had to providing independent scientific advice to government," he tweeted. Many others in the scientific commu-

By **THERESE RAPHAEL**
Bloomberg Opinion

Therese Raphael is a columnist for Bloomberg Opinion. She was editorial page editor of the Wall Street Journal Europe.



nity echoed the sentiment.

The problem is SAGE is shrouded in such secrecy that it may be impossible to ever know for sure what influence Cummings had, if any. The real picture is likely to be more complicated than either side of the debate over Cummings's presence has been willing to acknowledge.

Nonscientists regularly serve on scientific advisory committees, but the presence of someone as pivotal politically as Cummings is highly unusual, if not unprecedented, as the government's former Chief Scientific Adviser David King noted. Still, scientists can't necessarily be faulted for allowing a political adviser into the room. Influencing policy sometimes means working closely with the powerful. But, humans being humans, that can get messy. You only needed to see the look of nausea on the face of Dr. Deborah Birx, the White House's coronavirus response coordinator, as President Donald Trump suggested that Americans may want to treat the virus by injecting themselves with disinfectant.

In the U.K., scientific advice is generally fed through to policymakers by government experts and scientific advisory committees, such as SAGE. It's certainly possible to find cases in the past when politicians sought to influence or quash advice they didn't like, but a wide-ranging 2017 study of such committees concluded that political interference was rare.

By the Guardian's count, there were 21 distinguished scientists on the SAGE committee, experts whom one would expect to be robust in putting forth their views; it's a stretch to think they were all somehow following Cummings's lead. His own writings suggest such a reverence for precisely this kind of expertise that it is difficult to believe he would have treated this group with the contempt he might a room of special political advisers had a different consensus emerged.

The problem is less Cummings's presence and more the lack of disclosure. COVID-19 puts a particular committee at the center of the government's response and life-and-death decisions.

See **BORIS** on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

How we should spell relief

The new \$484 billion COVID-19 relief bill passed by Congress on April 23 takes some useful steps, but it still fails to deliver substantive relief to tens of millions of Americans. Our leaders must do better, and quickly.

What's needed is a relief package that matches the scale of the economic disaster now hitting American families. It needs to be far-reaching, and tailored to help those who need it most.

Here is some of what the next COVID-19 relief package should include:

Long-term cash assistance. The \$1,200 payments now going to some Americans are not even enough to cover a single month's rent in Phoenix, let alone in pricier cities like New York or Los Angeles. With 27 million U.S. jobs lost in just the last few weeks and states lagging on processing unemployment insurance claims, families need serious cash assistance. The Automatic BOOST to Communities Act — just introduced by Democratic Reps. Rashida Tlaib of Minnesota and Pramila Jayapal of Washington — would provide \$2,000 to every American immediately, followed by \$1,000 per month for a full year after the end of the crisis.

A bailout for Main Street, not Wall Street. The \$349 billion Paycheck Protection Program, part of the first stimulus bill, was supposed to help small businesses. But while more than 70 publicly traded companies — some seemingly large and prosperous — received loans, it's been estimated that less than one in 10 businesses owned by people of color will get this help. We must rescue the small, mom-and-pop businesses that anchor communities but don't have an accounting staff to submit their loan applications or high-priced lawyers to restructure their debt.

Help for renters and homeowners. While many states and municipalities have a moratorium on evictions (at least for now), people around the country are still struggling to keep a roof over their heads. The economic downturn will disproportionately impact people of color who already spend more of their income on housing than white families. Congress should pass a national housing voucher program to support low- and moderate-income renters and homeowners through the next two or three years.

Aid for state and local governments. Astonishingly, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) has suggested that states should go into bankruptcy rather than get federal help. States, which unlike the federal government cannot print their own money, shoulder an enormous burden in funding hospitals and other vital services even as tax revenues plummet. From

2008 to 2013, state governments shed 170,000 jobs, worsening the Great Recession. Let's not repeat this mistake.

Keep it honest. Tough, thorough oversight is needed to ensure that help goes where it's most needed. A provision in the new stimulus bill calls for the creation of an oversight committee to monitor "efficiency, effectiveness, equity and transparency." Future legislation must make a similar commitment. House Financial Services Chair Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) is a legislative champion on this issue.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States was already suffering from a pandemic of inequality. How is it that in the world's richest country, the people we call "essential workers" often have no paid sick leave or access to health care?

The coronavirus calls on us to rethink everything, and redouble our commitment to get real help to those who need it.

CORONAVIRUS

From Page 8

pandemic ends. In the meantime, as Dr. Robert Redfield, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, warned, we face a likelihood of the flu and coronavirus striking simultaneously in the fall.

This is no time to lose our resolve. Polling across the nation shows Americans understand the importance of making public health the top priority.

They're putting their trust in the science and the health experts, who continue to unravel the mysteries of COVID-19. That's as it should be.

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BORIS

From Page 8

The stakes couldn't be higher and, whatever the scientific advice, science nearly always involves uncertainty; ultimately the decisions taken are political. The public deserves to know who is providing the input and also what assumptions are being made. Of course, none of this would be so controversial if the government's response hadn't been marred by so many missteps, from its early embrace of "herd immunity" to reversals on testing and guidance for personal protective equipment.

Johnson's own principle of transparency now demands relaxing the secrecy around SAGE. In a recent letter to a parliamentary committee, SAGE's chair, Chief Scientific Officer Patrick Vallance, said that the "decision not to disclose" committee membership was made upon the advice of the Center for the Protection of National Infrastructure, which deals mainly with terrorist threats and provides advice to keep businesses secure from external threats. He defended the policy by saying it "contributes toward safeguarding individual members' personal security and protects them from lobbying and other forms of unwanted influence which may hinder their ability to give impartial advice."

That justification feels forced. SAGE members are free to publicize their own involvement if they like, so how bad can the risk be?

All of this secrecy runs counter to efforts by governments and scientists around the world, who are furiously sharing data and models and learning from each other about how to fight this virus. Transparency can help speed discovery and, where needed, course corrections. But under current practices it's impossible to know, or scrutinize the basis on which U.K. decisions are made, especially where that policy makes Britain an outlier.

Scientists have an even more important role to play in the new coronavirus reality we will all have to live with. But, as the saying goes, they ought to be "on tap, not on top." If Johnson is to rebuild some of the trust that has been lost in his absence, being clear about the nature of the advice and who is giving it is a good place to start.

Supreme Court ducks a Second Amendment issue—for now

It's not often that a nondecision is a good decision, but the Supreme Court's ruling Monday morning that it would not decide a New York City gun case was the right call.

And, in a sense, gun control advocates dodged a legal bullet — this time. Unfortunately, the conservative members of the court signaled in dissents that they might be looking for a way to recognize a Second Amendment right to carry a firearm in public.

The decision arose from a New York City law that barred transport of certain firearms — those licensed for possession in the home — to anyplace other than a handful of shooting ranges in the city. That was an unnecessarily restrictive law, and the gun rights folks sued, eventually pushing the issue to the Supreme Court, which last year accepted the case.

New York, facing the possibility that its law might become a vehicle for the Supreme Court to expand gun rights, changed it to accommodate the complaint in the lawsuit by letting gun owners with so-called "premise permits" transport their weapons — locked and unloaded — out of the city, including to second homes. Then New York told the court that it ought to dismiss the case as moot because the restraint at issue had been removed.

The plaintiffs argued that the case still had legs because the new law meant that if they were transporting a firearm, they couldn't stop for lunch or a cup of coffee along the way, a notion that New York officials rejected. The plaintiffs also said, in an argument added late in the appeals process, that they might be able to sue the city for damages.

The court, fortunately, disagreed with the stop-for-coffee objection and kicked the damages issue back to the lower courts.

The court's decision (which agreed with the LA Times' editorial board stance) was two pages long. Justice Samuel A. Alito Jr.'s dissent ran for 31 pages. He argued that the case was not moot because the changes in New York's law did not address all of the plaintiffs' complaints, and so the court should have ruled on the merits. And he made it clear which way he would have gone.

"If this Court were to hold, as petitioners request and as I believe we should, that" the New York law "violated petitioners' 2nd Amendment right, the District Court on remand could (and probably should) award damages," Alito wrote.

By **ADAM BRIONES**
Tribune News Service



Adam Briones is economic equity director at The Greenlining Institute. This column was produced for the Progressive Media Project, which is operated by The Progressive and distributed by Tribune News Service.

2008 to 2013, state governments shed 170,000 jobs, worsening the Great Recession. Let's not repeat this mistake.

Keep it honest. Tough, thorough oversight is needed to ensure that help goes where it's most needed. A provision in the new stimulus bill calls for the creation of an oversight committee to monitor "efficiency, effectiveness, equity and transparency." Future legislation must make a similar commitment. House Financial Services Chair Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) is a legislative champion on this issue.

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The coronavirus calls on us to rethink everything, and redouble our commitment to get real help to those who need it.

By **SCOTT MARTELLE**
Los Angeles Times



Scott Martelle, a veteran journalist and author of six history books, is a member of The Los Angeles Times editorial board.

The core issue here arises from the court's 2008 decision in *District of Columbia v. Heller* that the Second Amendment confers an individual right to possess a firearm in the home for self-protection, a decision that upended decades of precedent that looked at gun rights as collective — militias, for instance — rather than personal.

"We deal here with the same core Second Amendment right, the right to keep a handgun in the home for self-defense," Alito wrote in his dissent Monday. If that right exists, then "a necessary concomitant of this right is the right to take a gun outside the home for certain purposes," including for repairs, to practice at ranges or to sell the firearm.

Which suggests he believes there is a Second Amendment right to bear arms outside the home.

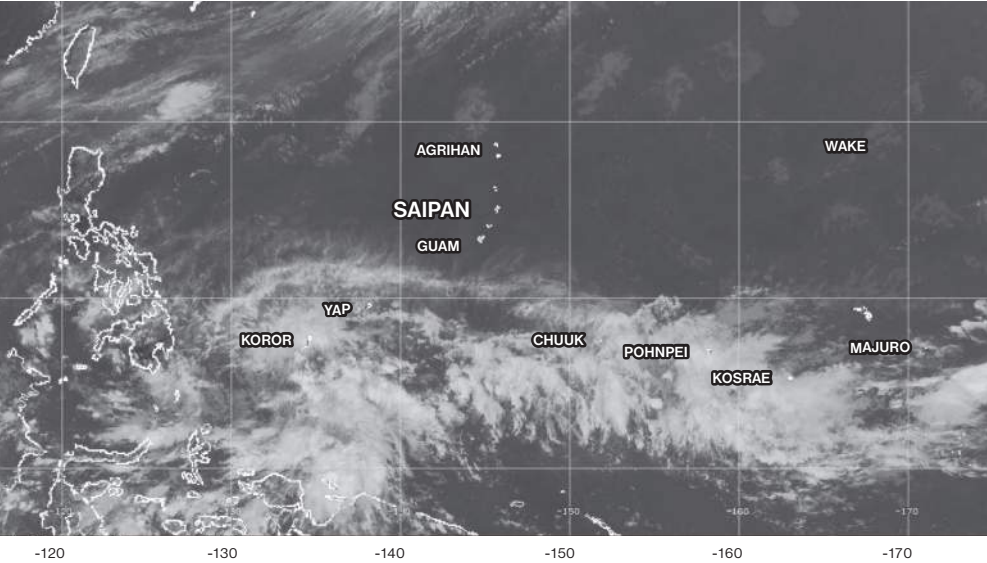
This is far from the end of the issue. Justice Brett Kavanaugh, while agreeing with the majority that the New York case was moot, wrote, "I also agree with Justice Alito's general analysis" and his concern "that some federal and state courts may not be properly applying *Heller* and *McDonald*," a 2010 decision over a Chicago gun control ordinance that said the *Heller* decision also applied to state and local laws.

"The Court should address that issue soon," Kavanaugh wrote, "perhaps in one of the several Second Amendment cases with petitions for certiorari now pending before the Court."

That doesn't bode well for those who believe that the Second Amendment has been misread and misunderstood by members of the Supreme Court who have bought into a revisionist history of what the Second Amendment really means.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY	
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.		Mostly cloudy. Isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated light showers.	
90°	77°	90°	77°	90°	77°	88°	77°	89°	77°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 7:35 AM, TUESDAY, APRIL 28, 2020
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite imagery shows very dry conditions across the Marianas with similarly dry weather found well to the east toward Wake Island. A series of small trade-wind disturbances are found between 15N and 22N toward the Date Line. Buoys and altimetry data show seas of 6 to 8 feet around the Marianas.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA			▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	89° / 79°	
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 79°	
Yap	Showers	86° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	87° / 80°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°	
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:54 AM	6:34 PM
Thursday	5:54 AM	6:34 PM
Friday	5:53 AM	6:34 PM
Saturday	5:53 AM	6:34 PM
Sunday	5:52 AM	6:35 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	10:32 AM	11:55 PM	-
Thursday	11:29 AM	-	-
Friday	-	12:48 AM	12:28 PM
Saturday	-	1:38 AM	1:27 PM
Sunday	-	2:27 AM	2:26 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	66° / 55°	
Beijing	Sunny	95° / 59°	
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	81° / 73°	
Honolulu	Windy	83° / 72°	
London	Rain	55° / 45°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	84° / 63°	
Manila	Partly Cloudy	97° / 81°	
Melbourne	Rain	55° / 46°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	83° / 77°	
New York	Showers	73° / 55°	
Osaka	Sunny	57° / 50°	
Paris	Showers	64° / 48°	
Busan	Rain	55° / 46°	
Rome	Showers	66° / 52°	
Salem	Thunderstorm	75° / 51°	
San Francisco	Windy	62° / 52°	
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	73° / 57°	
Tokyo	Sunny	73° / 57°	
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	75° / 63°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
12:47 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.81	
6:13 AM	LOW TIDE	1.36	
10:30 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.69	
6:11 PM	LOW TIDE	0.00	

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NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF
APRIL 16, 2020



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

- Cashier & Customer Service**
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 664-4282
Pay bills online at www.cucgov.org or via phone by calling toll free 1-(855)-729-2282



Department of Public Works

- Solid Waste Management Division**
 - Lower Base Transfer Station & Marpi Landfill**
Open all week except Wednesday
7:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 322-2745



Department of Finance

- Division of Revenue & Taxation**
CASHIER ONLY
Monday - Friday
7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Tel: (670) 664-1000
- Division of Customs Services**
 - Airport:** OPEN DAILY
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 - Seaport:** Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
 - Chalan Kanoa Post Office:**
Monday - Friday 7:30 AM - 4:30 PM
Saturday 7:30 AM - 11:30 AM



Department of Public Lands

- CASHIER ONLY
Monday - Thursday
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM
Tel: (670) 234-3751/52/53/54



Saipan Zoning Office

- Available via phone only
Monday - Thursday
7:30 AM - 11:30 AM
Tel: (670) 234-9661/2/3
Email: yubert.alepuyo@zoning.gov.mp
Call or email for more information



CNMI State Medicaid Agency

- Eligibility staff via phone only
Tuesday - Thursday from 8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Tel: (670) 664-4880/4882
Accepting applications and supporting documents via drop-box at Medicaid Office. Medicaid application & renewal/redetermination forms must be original. Applications/forms available for pick up next to the drop-box or online at: www.medicaid.cnmi.mp



Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

- Available via phone or email only on Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Tel: (670) 322-6537/38
Email: maryann@ovrgov.net



Office of the Attorney General

- Civil & Criminal Divisions**
Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Tel: (670) 237-7500/7600



Office of the Public Defender

- Monday - Friday
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Tel: (670) 234-6503



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

GOVERNMENT RESOURCE LISTING AS OF
APRIL 16, 2020



Department of Community and Cultural Affairs

- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)**
Accepting Calls From Existing Customers Only
Tel: (670) 287-1475
- Division of Youth Services (DYS) On-Call**
Saipan: (670) 285-2780 / 287-2781 / 287-1773
Tinian: (670) 287-3268
Rota: (670) 287-2553
- Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF)**
For inquiries regarding parent eligibility requirements for CCDF Program:
Tel: (670) 783-8571 / (670) 783-8572
Email: dccajguerrero@gmail.com / ccdf.jrosario@gmail.com
- Commonwealth Council for Arts and Culture (CCAC)**
For Recovery Arts Grant Application Submissions. Grant Guidelines are available at <http://www.cnmiartscouncil.org>
Tel.: (670) 287-4585
Email: parkeryobei@gmail.com
- Historic Preservation Office (HPO)**
For Processing of Federal 106 Consultations Call
Tel: (670) 789-1986
Email: rchong.cnmihipo@gmail.com



Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP)
Benefit Pick Up: Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Application Pick Up: Monday - Friday
8:00 AM - 6:00 PM

Application Submission:
Anytime via Drop-Box

Application Inquiries:
Tel: (670) 237-2801/2802

To download the NAP application and other forms go to dcca.gov.mp
Email: support@cnminap.gov.mp

Business

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

After a month of temporarily closing down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Paris Croissant Bakery is open once again serving your favorite items. The bakery was the first establishment you will see as you enter Paseo de Marianas if you are coming from Beach Road.

With its Parisian-style window awnings, a couple of tables and chairs outside, the sight of freshly baked bread by the window and the whiff of freshly brewed coffee makes your guard go down and check out this quaint bakery.

According to Paris Croissant manager Youngmin Choi, they closed down a month ago due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "After Super Typhoon Yutu, many businesses including ours were closed because there was no power, water, and my facilities were broken. The same with Super Typhoon Soudelor," he said.

"But this COVID-19 pandemic created a worldwide scare—people were getting sick and spreading the virus so we decided to temporarily close to protect all employees and customers... now, it has been a month already and we are opening once again as things seem to get better," he added.

Paris Croissant Bakery started in 1993 and in 2015 it grew to include a café. "The way we make and bake our bread is unique but it remains a classic in this island because of the delicious familiar and friendly

Paris Croissant Bakery is ready to serve



Paris Croissant Bakery's specialty are its mini rolls.



Paris Croissant Bakery makes bread with high quality ingredients from Korea.

taste. We use high-quality ingredients "from Korea for all of our bread," he said.

"We do fresh coffee right as we roast our own coffee beans. We are also known for



Established On Saipan 27 years ago, Paris Croissant Bakery is a favorite of locals and tourists.

our 'Snow Ice' which everyone describes as awesome... our roll cakes and morning rolls are our bestsellers so I advise everyone not to miss them," he added.

Currently, Paris Croissant Bakery has a promotional menu. For drinks, enjoy hot or cold Americano and iced

tea for only \$2, regular size. Snow Ice for only \$5 and all other drinks are 20% off. For food, enjoy their bagel with cream cheese for only \$3, Korean-style egg sandwich for only \$4, papa potato for only \$4, bulgogi cheeseburger for only \$5, and the Korean street food favorite

tteokbokki for only \$7. Paris Croissant Bakery is open from 11am to 6pm, Tuesday-Sunday for take-out only. For orders and more information, call Paris Croissant Bakery at (670) 233-9292 and its sister bakery and café, Summer Snow in Susupe, at (670) 234- 7669.

UN: \$90M could protect 700M poor in pandemic

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The U.N. humanitarian chief said Monday that \$90 billion could provide income support, food and a health response to the coronavirus pandemic for 700 million of the world's most vulnerable people—a price tag just 1 percent of the \$8 trillion stimulus package the 20 richest countries put in place to safeguard the global economy.

Mark Lowcock told a video briefing most experts agree that the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic hasn't reached the poorest parts of the world, but may peak in the next three to six months.

He said about 700 million people—10 percent of the world's population—are most vulnerable and concentrated in about 30 to 40 countries which already receive humanitarian assistance and will see a big drop in incomes as the virus spreads and governments impose restrictive measures and lock downs.

"If you wanted to protect

them against that drop in income, then probably for about \$60 billion you could do that," Lowcock said.

And for something like \$30 billion, he said, people facing the threat of starvation can get food, and the health response to COVID-19 can be financed.

Lowcock said probably two-thirds of the \$90 billion could come from international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

"They would need to change the terms on which they provide assistance to some people," he said. "So, for example, they would need to reduce interest rates and provide some debt relief. But they have the firepower if they were given a bit more subsidy to probably meet about two-thirds of the costs."

Lowcock said the remaining one-third could be financed by a one-time increase in government development assistance.

He said the argument he's making is that a one-off 20

percent increase "will save you having to deal with a 10-year problem."

"\$90 billion is a lot of money but it is an affordable sum of money," he said.

The U.N. is not going to appeal for \$90 billion, Lowcock said, but "what I am suggesting is a lot of the suffering and loss of life can be contained within sums of money which are imaginable."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres did launch a \$2 billion appeal on March 25 to help vulnerable and conflict-torn countries in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and South America tackle the coronavirus pandemic. Lowcock said he is encouraged the appeal has received a little over \$1 billion in one month, including 300 million euros from Germany announced Monday evening.

On May 7, he said, a revised appeal will be launched seeking additional resources because the pandemic is growing and new countries need help.

Companies press for limited liability from virus lawsuits

As companies start planning their reopening in the coming weeks, business groups are pushing Congress to limit liability from potential lawsuits filed by workers and customers infected by the coronavirus.

They appear to have the White House's ear.

President Donald Trump has floated shielding businesses from lawsuits. His top economic adviser Larry Kudlow said on CNBC last week that businesses shouldn't be held liable to trial lawyers "putting on false lawsuits that will probably be thrown out of court." He said the issue could require legislation, and Senate Majority Leader Mitch Mc-

Connell said Monday that the issue would be a priority when lawmakers return.

At issue is how to balance protecting businesses from lawsuits that could distract them and even lead to financial ruin, while also enabling justice for customers and workers who in a time of rapidly rising unemployment may not have the option of leaving their jobs for something safer.

"If there is no liability on the part of employers without a set of rules by which employers have to abide by, then that means you can have a wild wild west," said Kent Swig, president of Swig Equi-

ties, LLC, a privately owned real estate investment and development company.

"You have to have a balance," he added, "and you have to have rules and regulations."

Swig says he's planning measures like one-way lanes in public corridors in the lobbies and plexiglass dividers in offices at his properties. But he's seeking national guidelines as well.

Linda Kelly, general counsel at the National Association of Manufacturers, said her trade group is "not trying to protect bad actors, and we are also not saying that liability should be completely eliminated."



LEADING INDICATORS		
DOW	S&P	NASDAQ
24,133.78	2,878.48	8,730.16
+358.51	+41.74	+95.64
1.51%	1.47%	1.11%

In U.S. dollar terms

EXCHANGE RATES					
Australian Dollar	1.5490	Hong Kong Dollar	7.7504	Russian Ruble	73.9458
British Pound	0.8051	Indian Rupee	75.7490	Singapore Dollar	1.4197
Canadian Dollar	1.4053	Japanese Yen	107.1860	South Korean Won	1198.59
Chinese Yuan	6.9730	Malaysian Ringgit	4.3098	Swiss Franc	0.9759
Euro	0.9237	New Zealand Dollar	1.6642	Taiwan Dollar	29.4437
		Philippine Peso	49.6773	Thailand Baht	32.4810

Nation

Trump says virus testing ‘not a problem,’ but doubts persist

WASHINGTON (AP)—The White House released new guidelines Monday aimed at answering criticism that America’s coronavirus testing has been too slow, and President Donald Trump tried to pivot toward a focus on “re-opening” the nation.

Still, there were doubts from public health experts that the White House’s new testing targets were sufficient.

Monday’s developments were meant to fill critical gaps in White House plans to begin

easing restrictions, ramping up testing for the virus while shifting the president’s focus toward recovery from the economic collapse caused by the outbreak. The administration unveiled a “blueprint” for states to scale up their testing in the coming week—a tacit admission, despite public statements to the contrary, that testing capacity and availability over the past two months have been lacking.

The new testing targets would ensure states had

enough COVID-19 tests available to sample at least 2.6% of their populations each month—a figure already met by a majority of states. Areas that have been harder hit by the virus would be able to test at double that rate, or higher, the White House said.

The testing issue has bedeviled the administration for months. Trump told reporters on March 6 during a visit to the CDC in Atlanta that “anybody that wants a test can get a test,” but the reality has

proved to be vastly different.

The initial COVID-19 test developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was contaminated, and early kits operated only on platforms able to perform a small number of tests per day. While the rate of testing increased as tests developed for higher-capacity platforms, they were still limited by shortages of supplies, from nasal swabs to the reagents used to process the samples.

Administration officials

maintained Monday that the limiting factor now is actually the availability of samples from people who have been tested—either because guidelines on who could be tested are too stringent or because there are not enough health workers able to take nasal swab samples from them.

The CDC moved to address one of those concerns Monday, expanding the list of people to be prioritized for virus testing to include those who show no symptoms but are in high-risk settings like nursing homes. And Trump met with leaders of businesses including CVS, Walmart and Kroger, who said they were working to expand access to tests across the country.

“Testing is not going to be a problem at all,” Trump said later in the Rose Garden.

However, many of the ad-

ministration’s past pledges and goals on testing have not been met.

Jeremy Konyndyk, a disaster preparedness expert who helped lead the Obama administration response to Ebola, said the administration’s testing plans are well short of what is needed.

Researchers at Harvard have estimated the country needs to be testing a minimum of 500,000 people per day, and possibly many more. Konyndyk said the aim should be 2 million to 3 million per day. Trump said the current total, up sharply in recent days, is over 200,000 per day.

Konyndyk said: “Over the past month, we’ve doubled or if you want to be really generous tripled the testing capacity in this country. We need to take where we are now and expand it tenfold.”



AP

President Donald Trump speaks about the coronavirus in the Rose Garden of the White House, Monday, April 27, 2020, in Washington.

Trump urges states to consider opening schools before summer

President Donald Trump says states should “seriously consider” reopening their public schools before the end of the academic year, even though dozens already have said it would be unsafe for students to return until the summer or fall.

Trump made the comments Monday in a call with governors discussing how to reopen their economies, among other topics.

“Some of you might start thinking about school openings, because a lot of people are wanting to have the school openings. It’s not a big subject, young children have done very well in this disaster that we’ve all gone through,” he said. While addressing Vice President Mike Pence, Trump added that it’s something “they can seriously consider, and maybe get going on.”

None of the governors on the call responded to the suggestion, according to a recording obtained by The Associ-

ated Press.

Trump made the comments as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention worked to finalize guidelines for reopening the economy. For schools, that included putting students’ desks 6 feet apart, serving meals in the classroom instead of the cafeteria and closing playgrounds.

Reopening schools is considered key to getting the economy moving again. Without a safe place for their kids, many parents would have difficulty returning to work.

But some education officials say opening schools quickly would bring major risk and little reward, especially since the end of the school year is approaching.

“Are they going to reopen for two weeks? Three weeks?” said Daniel Domenech, executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, “It’s not the right

thing to do. Particularly when we’re involving the safety and welfare of our students.”

At a White House news conference Monday, Trump acknowledged that there’s little time left in the school year, even as he said many states are thinking about getting kids back into the classroom.

“I think you’ll see a lot of schools open up even if it’s for a very short period of time,” he said. “In terms of what this vicious virus goes after, young people seem to do very well. Young people seem to do very well so I know that there are some governors that aren’t necessarily ready to open up states, but they may be ready to open up the school systems.”

Schools across the nation have closed during the pandemic, and dozens of states have ordered their schools to remain closed through the rest of this academic year. Only a few have publicly discussed

earlier openings, including Montana, which says school districts can resume classroom instruction on May 7.

In many districts, officials have said it’s still unclear whether students will be able to return to the classroom by next fall. And even if they do, many are planning for social distancing measures that could make school look radically different from the past.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said on CNN that it’s “way too early” to reopen his city’s schools, adding that “you don’t get a lot of credit for moving too quickly to reopen.”

Responding to Trump’s comments, one of the nation’s largest teachers unions said there’s still much work to be done before schools can open safely. The American Federation of Teachers said there needs to be better testing and tracking for the virus, and schools must have access to personal protective equipment. (AP)

As fewer people fly, rate of guns found in bags by TSA jumps

With far fewer people flying because of travel restrictions during the coronavirus pandemic, airport security screeners are naturally finding fewer guns in carry-on baggage.

But the ratio of guns to passengers seeking to board airplanes has jumped sharply.

The Transportation Security Administration said Monday that it found 58 guns at checkpoints from March 22 to April 22, compared with 346 guns over the same stretch last year.

Adjusting for the 95% drop in travelers, that means TSA screeners found one gun for every 80,000 people screened—or 2.7 times the rate of a year ago, when they found one gun for every 216,200 people.

TSA declined to offer an explanation or theory about why the rate of finding guns has gone up this spring.

Jeffrey Price, who teaches aviation security at the Metropolitan State University in Denver, said he thinks there are several reasons behind the higher rate of gun discoveries: a recent spike in gun sales, an “apocalypse mindset” that makes people feel justified carrying a gun on a plane, and shorter TSA lines.

With fewer people to screen, TSA screeners “can take a lot more time with each person and their belongings,” Price said.

Checkpoint screeners use X-ray machines that alert them to take a closer look if

something appears unusual in the contents of a bag. In past government-run covert tests, TSA screeners processing pre-pandemic levels of passengers failed to find fake weapons a high percentage of the time, according to published reports.

While the exact numbers remain classified, the inspector general of the Homeland Security Department said in an unclassified summary that a 2017 test found problems with both screener performance and TSA equipment.

Another aviation-security expert, Sheldon Jacobson at the University of Illinois, said the uptick in gun-carrying rates could be because people who are still flying during a pandemic may be different—and more prone to carry a gun. Leisure travelers in particular have mostly stopped flying.

“People who are leisure flyers traveling with their families, they don’t bring guns to checkpoints,” Jacobson said.

One trend has held constant in 2019 and 2020: Most of the guns TSA screeners find in carry-on bags are loaded. The agency said that from Feb. 24 through April 22 its screeners found 317 guns, and 263 were loaded.

It is legal to ship guns on an airline plane if they are unloaded, packed in a locked case and stored in checked baggage that goes in the cargo hold. (AP)

Asia

Questions over Kim's health highlight intelligence limits

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's prolonged public absence has led to rumors of ill health and worries about how it could influence the future of what one analyst calls Northeast Asia's "Achilles' heel," a reference to the North's belligerence and unpredictable nature.

But there's a basic question debated by the media and government intelligence services: Are the rumors even true?

The exact state of Kim's health matters because it could determine the stability of the dynastic government in Pyongyang and the security of nuclear weapons that the nation has repeatedly threatened to use on its neighbors and the United States.

It's a problem that outside nations have faced for decades. Gathering intelligence on perhaps the world's most secretive, suspicious and difficult-to-read country is incredibly difficult. And there's probably nothing North Korea guards more closely than information on Kim's health, which is only likely shared among a small portion of the elite, including his powerful sister, Kim Yo Jong.

At the heart of the intelligence shortcomings about North Korea is its extremely closed nature. But there is also plenty of blame leveled in South Korea at efforts there. Supporters of South Korea's liberal government, which remains eager for inter-Korean engagement, lament the previous decade of conservative rule, when exchanges between diplomats, government and business leaders, aid groups and others stopped under hard-line policies toward North Korea's nuclear ambitions. This, they say, deprived spies of high-quality information sources.

Conservatives, meanwhile, blame liberals for supposedly downsizing espionage operations while pursuing inter-Korean rapprochement. They say such networks have been difficult to rebuild.

South Korea's government has repeatedly played down unconfirmed media reports that Kim is in fragile health following heart surgery, saying it has detected no unusual activity in North Korea or any emergency preparation by its ruling Workers' Party, military

and Cabinet. Without specifying its sources, South Korea's presidential office said it believes Kim is handling state affairs normally at an unspecified site outside the capital, Pyongyang.

U.S. President Donald Trump told reporters Monday that he has a "very good idea" about Kim's health but couldn't talk about it and wished him well.

"I do know how he's doing, relatively speaking," Trump said at the White House. "You'll probably be hearing in the not-too-distant future."

Some experts say South Korea, as well as its regional neighbors and ally Washington, must begin preparing for high-level instability that could come if Kim is sidelined by health problems or even dies.



Kim

That could include North Korean refugees flooding South Korea or China or military hard-liners letting loose nuclear weapons.

Planning for those are worst-case scenarios is crucial because nobody knows for sure what's happening, said Nam Sung-wook, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Korea University who termed the situation the "Achilles' heel" of international politics in Northeast Asia.

"He could very well be OK and reappear in North Korean state media again, but considering his weight and worsening shape, the risks linked to his health will sharply increase as he gets older," said Nam, a former director of a think tank affiliated with South Korea's main spy agency.

Kim is overweight, reportedly smokes heavily and has other health problems.

Questions about Kim's health have been raised since he missed the birthday celebration of his late grandfather and state founder Kim Il Sung on April 15, the country's most important holiday.

Kim, who is in his mid-30s, was last seen in public on April 11, when he presided over a meeting discussing coronavirus prevention and electing his sister as an alternate member of the political bureau of the ruling Workers' Party. State media have since reported that he sent greetings to Syrian President Bashar Assad, Cuban Presi-

dent Miguel Díaz-Canel and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.

On Monday, the official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said Kim sent a message of gratitude to workers building tourist facilities in the coastal town of Wonsan, which is where some speculate he is staying. No photos of him were published.

South Korean intelligence and North Korean state media reports suggest that Kim could have suffered some sort of medical setback but likely not a life-threatening one, said Du Hyeogn Cha, a senior researcher at Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

The root problem may be the shaky nature of South Korean intelligence.

"Even after decades of work, South Korea has yet to build a reliable intelligence network to gather information on the North," said Cha, an intelligence secretary to former South Korean President Lee Myung-bak. "It's clear our government has some level of information on the North, but not enough to make a confident statement about where he is and whether he's fully healthy."

Finding out is important because incapacity at the top could lead to bogged-down decision-making that could boost the hard-liners who emerged following the collapse of Kim's second summit with Trump in February last year. The Americans at that summit rejected North Korean demands for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of the North's nuclear capabilities.

The National Intelligence Service, Seoul's spy agency, has said it can't confirm whether Kim had surgery. If Kim emerges well in state media, he would join past North Korean officials who were incorrectly reported incapacitated by outside media.

"Kim Il Sung shot dead" remains perhaps the most famous newspaper headline in South Korean history. The 1986 Chosun Ilbo story was initially backed by a South Korean military statement that North Korea had announced the demise of its founder over loudspeakers at the mine-strewn border between the rival nations. But hours later, Kim Il Sung appeared at Pyongyang's airport to greet a Mongolian delegation.

World

Brazil edge toward being next coronavirus hot spot

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—Brazil is emerging as potentially the next big hot spot for the coronavirus amid President Jair Bolsonaro's insistence that it is just a "little flu" and that there is no need for the sharp restrictions that have slowed the infection's spread in Europe and the U.S.

As some U.S. states and European countries moved gradually Monday to ease their limits on movement and commerce, the intensifying outbreak in Brazil—Latin America's biggest country, with 211 million people—pushed some hospitals to the breaking point, with signs that a growing number of victims are now dying at home.

"We have all the conditions here for the pandemic to become much more serious," said Paulo Brandão, a virologist at the University of Sao Paulo.

Brazil officially reported about 4,500 deaths and almost 67,000 confirmed infections. But the true numbers there, as in many other countries, are believed to be vastly higher given the lack of testing and the many people without severe symptoms who haven't sought hospital care.

Some scientists said over 1 million in Brazil are probably infected. The country is heading into winter, which can worsen respiratory illnesses.

Worldwide, the death toll topped 210,000, according



AP

An empty coffin stands against the wall at the entrance of a funeral home during the COVID-19 pandemic at the Nossa Senhora das Gracas cemetery in Duque de Caxias, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Monday, April 27, 2020.

to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The number of dead in the U.S. surpassed 55,000—close to the 58,000 U.S. troops killed during the Vietnam War. Italy, Britain, Spain and France accounted for more than 20,000 deaths each.

In other developments:

■ U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday that deaths in the United States from the coronavirus could reach as high as 70,000, after putting the number at 60,000 several times earlier this month.

■ The Trump administration worked to draw up new guidelines for how restaurants, schools, churches and businesses can safely reopen. The administration also unveiled a "blueprint" for states to scale up their virus testing in the coming week. Still, there were doubts from public health experts that the new testing targets were sufficient.

■ The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention expanded the list of people to be prioritized for virus testing to include those who show no symptoms but are in high-risk settings such as nursing homes.

■ British Prime Minister Boris Johnson returned to work after a bout with the virus and warned strongly against easing his own country's lockdown too soon: "I refuse to throw away all the effort and the sacrifice of the British people and to risk a second major outbreak and huge loss of life."

■ New York canceled its Democratic presidential primary, set for June 23, since Bernie Sanders has already conceded the nomination to Joe Biden. In a bit of encouraging news, the state reported 337 deaths for the lowest daily count this month, down from nearly 800 almost three weeks ago.

UN chief: Extremists using COVID-19 to recruit online youths

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned Monday that extremist groups are taking advantage of COVID-19 lock downs to intensify social media efforts to spread hatred and recruit young people who are spending more time online.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, he said, one of every five young people was not getting an education, training or working, and one of every four was affected by violence or conflict. And he lamented that every year, 12 million girls become mothers when they are still children.

Guterres told a U.N. Security Council meeting on youth, peace and security

that "these frustrations and, frankly, failures to address them by those in power today, fuel declining confidence in political establishments and institutions."

"When such a cycle takes hold, it is all too easy for extremist groups to exploit the anger and despair, and the risk of radicalization climbs," he said.

But despite these challenges, the U.N. chief said young people "are still finding ways to engage, support each other, and to demand and drive change"—including in the fight against COVID-19.

Guterres pointed to young people in Colombia, Ghana, Iraq and several other countries joining humanitarian

workers in delivering supplies to front-line health workers and people in need, keeping communications open within communities while maintaining social distancing. He said young people are also supporting his March 23 call for a cease-fire in all conflicts in the world.

Jayathma Wickramanayake, the secretary-general's envoy on youth, criticized the media for focusing on "the small minority of young people who disregarded guidelines" and put people at risk by going to beaches, pubs and parties—and for "completely sidelining the thousands of young people who were already fighting in the front lines of the crisis."

Good Housekeeping

DIY: Plant a victory garden now and grow your own groceries

By JEANETTE MARANTOS
LOS ANGELES TIMES

OK, the fallout from this pandemic is bad, but people, it's time to stop wringing your hands.

Put down the remote, step away from the fridge and do something that can really make a difference: Create your own victory garden.

Maybe all you have room

for are a few pots on a sunny balcony or windowsill. That works. Stick a tomato plant in a big, deep pot and basil by its side, and you will have the makings of a salad or marinara sauce in just a few months.

Maybe you have room in your yard — a patch of lawn you never use anymore or a weedy corner in the sunniest part of your yard. Cover it with cardboard and 8 inches of mulch,

water well and start planting, filling the holes with compost and organic potting soil until the magic of lasagna mulching creates some rich, healthy soil.

Yes, these are small victories against a huge, invisible enemy, but they are also a strike against helplessness, isolation and fear. It's part of our heritage as a society: Americans tend to rebel against dictates but willingly embrace patri-

otic calls to action.

Seriously, what's the downside of growing a few vegetables? Too much vitamin D from working outdoors? A farmer's tan? So much produce you (gasp) might have to share? Food banks are already seeing double the demand. Planting food now can help you and others get through the uncertain days ahead.

It's also a great way to im-

prove your mental health.

Take it from me; when I'm hanging by a thread, my plants keep me sane, and all they ask is a little water, sun and affection.

Here are some tips for making your own victory garden:

1. Pick a sunny spot

Find a spot for your garden plot (or pots) that gets at least six to eight hours of sunlight. Not sure? Professional gardener Lauri Kranz of Edible Gardens L.A. and co-author of "A Garden Can Be Anywhere," recommends taking a photo of your yard every two hours between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. to see where you can find the most consistent sun.

2. Prepare your soil

Prepping your soil before you plant is the most important thing you can do to have a successful garden (after ensuring it will get enough sun). Compost, aged steer manure, seaweed and other organic amendments can help create a rich, loamy soil full of the beneficial microbes that help your plants get the water and nutrients they need. No need to dig up all your soil; just add the layers of organic amendments and use a garden fork to mix them. If you're short on organic amendments or time, fill your raised beds or the planting holes in your garden with organic potting soil, which is full of the healthy ingredients you need.

3. Or your containers

If you are planting in pots, use organic potting soil — never regular soil — which has all the nutrients your plants need for a good start. For deep-rooted plants like tomatoes, peppers and eggplants, choose a pot at least knee-high. Check root depth on this chart created by Los Angeles County's Cooperative Extension office and add at least 4 inches to the estimated depths to make sure the roots have plenty of room, says master gardener Yvonne Savio, creator of the GardeninginLA.net blog.

4. How will you water?

The easiest technique is a drip irrigation system that waters automatically two to three times a week. Kranz lays half-inch irrigation hoses at one end of her raised bed boxes and then strings quarter-inch perforated hoses the length of the box, 6 inches apart. Drip irrigation is also good for keeping water off leaves to prevent mildew with plants like squash and cucumbers. Savio favors burying 5-gal-

lon nursery buckets (the kind with drainage holes in the bottom) so the tops are 4 inches above the soil. She then plants around the buckets and fills them with water once or twice a week so the moisture goes deep into the ground. That technique encourages roots to grow deep, so they're better protected from the summer heat. No matter what system you choose, water deeply two or three times a week, rather than short, frequent sessions that keep water from going deep in the ground.

5. Choose your crops

Before you buy, make a plan based on your available space and the things your family will actually eat. This is a great time to be planting in Southern California, since you can still put in a crop of fast-growing salad makings — such as lettuce, arugula, spinach and radishes — that will have time to mature before the summer heat causes the plants to "bolt" or go to seed. Meanwhile, start your warm-season crops now so they can get well settled in the ground before the onset of summer's highest heat. Corn and pumpkins may sound fun, but they require a lot of ground, so make sure you have the space. Savio and Kranz recommend choosing veggies you know your family will eat, and maybe one surprise — such as an eggplant or artichoke — to introduce your family to a new food. Tomatoes, peppers and eggplants are most easily grown from seedlings, but the pros recommend planting both seeds and seedlings with crops such as summer squash, cucumbers, beets and beans to stagger your harvests.

6. Include herbs and flowers

Include herbs in your garden, as close as possible to your kitchen door, and remember to include flowers such as cosmos, nasturtiums and sunflowers, as well as flowering herbs such as fennel and African basil. Savio has a handy list of what to plant, listed by month, on her website.


7. Add mulch

Once you plant, cover the soil with a thick layer (at least 4 inches) of organic mulch, such as straw, leaves or compost. Savio likes adding a thin layer of coffee grounds as well but recommends no deeper than half an inch, since the grounds can repel water if they are applied too thickly. The mulch helps preserve moisture and deter weeds while feeding the soil as it breaks down.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

†Vicente Terlaje Ada

JULY 26, 1953 – APRIL 23, 2020




In Celebration of his new life, he now joins his

Parents: †Vicente Reyes Ada & †Remedio Terlaje Ada
Reared God Parents: †Jose Camacho Sablan & †Antonia K. Sablan
Parents in Law: †Antonio B. Mendiola & †Dolores T. Mendiola

Brothers and Sisters and In-Laws:
 †Maria A. Lizama/†Jose San Nicolas Lizama
 †Jose T. Ada /+Soledad S. Ada
 †Juan T. Ada
 †Francisco T. Ada
 †Merced A. Aguon/Jose S. Aguon
 †Teresita A. Pangelinan
 †Theodora C. Ada
 †Luis P. Cristostomo
 †Aurelio T. Mendiola/†Asuncion P. Mendiola

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:
Wife: Bernadita Mendiola Ada
Children: Dorothy and Vicente Deleon Guerrero (Kobe, Kyle, Kady, Klin)
 Richard and Helen Ada (Joseph, Julie, Anthony, Michelle)
 Vicente M. Ada (Delvin, Shyanne, Shantelle, Ava)
 Michael M. Ada and David Mackie



Siblings and In Laws: Isidro T. Ada and Family
 Ignacio T. Ada and Family
 Henry T. Ada and Family
 Carol I. Ada and Family

God Brothers and Sisters:
 Maria S. & Joseph M. Santos and Family
 Trinidad S. & Antonio Muna and Family
 Thomas K. & Thelma S. Sablan and Family
 Carlos K. Sablan & Antonia Fitial and Family
 Remedio S. & Roman Reyes and Family
 Juan K. & Doreen R. Sablan and Family
 Raymond K. & Melva D. Sablan and Family
 Joseph K. Sablan and Family

Brothers and Sisters In-Law
 Felix Torres & Lou Mafnas and Family
 Carmen M. & Michael Pitts and Family
 Pedro T. Mendiola and Family
 Edward T. Mendiola
 Felipe T. & Katherine M. Mendiola and Family

He is also survived by numerous extended families and friends.


Daily Rosary is celebrated at 12:00 noon through Online Zoom Virtual Connection
 Meeting ID: 759 981 1998

Christian Burial: May 1, 2020 - Borja Funeral Home
 9:00-10:00- Public Viewing
 Online Viewing will also be available through Zoom
 10:00 - Liturgy of the Word & Final Blessings

Procession & Burial will follow at Tanapag Cemetery for the Rite of Committal

Please comply with the social distancing during the service and please wear your face mask.

Your thoughts and prayers are graciously appreciated.
Bernadita Mendiola Ada
Dorothy, Richard, Vicente, Michael and Family



Life & Style

Asian celebs work to combat racist attacks amid pandemic

NEW YORK (AP)—Actress Olivia Cheng was recently volunteering in Vancouver when she says she witnessed a man drive up to an elderly Chinese woman, roll down his window and yell, “This is your fault!” before throwing trash at her.

The incident enraged Cheng, and also served as another reason why she feels it’s so important for celebrities of Asian descent to use their voices and speak up against anti-Asian attacks, which authorities say are increasing during the coronavirus pandemic.

“I don’t think we can pretend that this isn’t happening,” Cheng, who stars in “The Stand” on CBS All Access, said in a recent interview with The Associated Press. “For now, it would not be unwise to be a little more careful, to maybe have buddy systems when possible to go get your groceries if you’re not feeling safe.”

The FBI reports there has been an uptick in hate crimes and harassment against Asian Americans since the outbreak of COVID-19, which first appeared in Wuhan, China, late last year.

Some people have blamed China and Asians in general for the spread of coronavirus; President Donald Trump at times has called it the “Chinese virus.”

In New York, state Attorney General Letitia James has set up a hotline to report harassment or other targeted crime. Some of those incidents have been filmed and posted online.



This combination photo shows Asian American actors, from left, Tzi Ma, Olivia Cheng, Will Yun Lee, Jeannie Mai and Jon M. Chu. As people across the world shelter in place due to the breakout of COVID-19, some people of Asian descent are worried about what happens when they have to leave the safety of their homes, due to the rise in hate crimes due to the growth of the virus, which is believed to have originated in Wuhan, China.

“Tigertail” star Tzi Ma says he’s been a victim of such harassment. He was entering a grocery store in Pasadena, California, recently when he was confronted by a man in a car.

“He looked at me straight in the eye and said, ‘You should be quarantined’ and took off,” said the veteran actor, who was born in Hong Kong but moved to the United States as a child.

“I got very angry obviously, flush with this kind of cold in your body. And I started screaming at him, but he was way too far away for him to hear me.”

Actor Alain Uy, a star of the upcoming Hulu series “Marvel’s Helstrom,” worried early on that such incidents would occur after the virus’ spread.

“Once this outbreak happened in Wuhan, we all kind of went, ‘OK, we know what this is gonna mean,’” said the actor, who was born

in the Philippines.

“Crazy Rich Asians” director Jon M. Chu said he’s been feeling more cautious than usual.

“It’s very sad when I feel a little bit weird when I’m going to go for a walk around the block,” he said.

“The Real” co-host, Jeannie Mai, who is half-Vietnamese and half-Chinese, revealed recently that for the first time, she needed someone to monitor her social media posts to delete racist comments.

“The Good Doctor” actor Will Yun Lee is even nervous about taking his baby son to the grocery store: “My wife is Caucasian, but my son is half Korean and half white. But he looks very Asian.”

But Ma and other stars are speaking up and working to combat the ignorance and harassment. Ma joined actress Celia Au and other celebrities and influencers in the recent

campaign called “Wash the Hate,” created by IW Group, an Asian American-focused marketing agency. The PSA features Ma, Au and others

washing their hands and reminding people that hygiene, not xenophobia, is the way to help combat the virus.

“If I can start the conversa-

tion, why not?” said Au, who was also born in Hong Kong. “If we don’t talk about it, then it’s not going to be talked about at all.”

Film festivals team up to offer free global fest on YouTube

NEW YORK (AP)—Film festivals worldwide are teaming up to launch “We Are One: A Global Film Festival,” which will play out over 10 days and be available for free on YouTube.

Tribeca Enterprises, the company behind the Tribeca Film Festival, and YouTube announced the online festival Monday. Other festivals will also contribute curated programming, including the Cannes Film Festival, the Sundance Film Festival, the Venice Film Festival and those in Berlin, Tokyo and New York.

The festival will benefit the

World Health Organization and local relief organizations, and encourage viewers to donate to COVID-19 relief efforts.

Tribeca Enterprises declined to say what movies would be included but “We Are One” isn’t expected to feature prominent feature films that were set to premiere at canceled festivals like May’s Cannes Film Festival or still planned ones like September’s Toronto Film Festival. Organizers said programming will include movies, shorts, documentaries, music, comedy and conversations.

“We hope that everyone

gets a taste of what makes each festival so unique and appreciates the art and power of film,” said Jane Rosenthal, chief executive of Tribeca Enterprises, in a statement.

Some festivals have experimented with virtual editions. Amazon Prime is currently hosting a modest online version of the Texas-based South by Southwest for both subscribers and non-subscribers. The Tribeca Film Festival hosted a non-public exhibition of some of its films for the film industry and press.

“We Are the One” will begin May 29 on YouTube.

Niece is shocked to learn reason uncle is in prison

DEAR ABBY: I cannot believe it! My parents tricked me into comforting a child molester.

When I was young, my uncle “Dave” went to prison. My family told it like this: “Dave had an affair with a 17-year-old girl who was pretending to be 18. They made a sex tape, her parents found it and accused him of rape. He went to prison for life.”

My parents visit and talk to him regularly, although nobody else in the extended family does, and they always encouraged me to communicate with him. They say he made “poor decisions” but doesn’t deserve his prison sentence or the family neglect. I felt bad for him, so I willingly joined in phone calls and letter writing.

I recently mentioned all this to a friend who is experienced in the legal field. He thought the story sounded peculiar, so we looked up Dave and found out he had multiple counts of sexual assault on a child under 14. In other words, my parents tricked me into regular conversations with a child molester.

I’m floored. Should I confront them? If so, what do I say? Should I tell my brother? I want nothing to do with Dave, and I’m horrified that my parents would lie in his defense.

HORRIFIED IN OKLAHOMA

DEAR HORRIFIED: I can understand why you want nothing to do with this relative. Tell your parents that you have written to me. Ask them why they chose to minimize what your uncle did and encourage you to communicate

with a predator. Doing so was a gross betrayal of your trust. I’m not sure how they can justify their actions because it is the job of parents to protect their child.

You should absolutely tell your brother what has been happening because it’s appalling.

DEAR ABBY: I love my boyfriend. We have been together nearly six years, but there are a few issues. The biggest one is his diet.

He eats like it’s going out of style. The only reason he’s not 400 pounds is because his job keeps him active. He has put on 60 pounds since we started dating, and we can no longer sleep together because of the snoring his weight gain has caused. He can no longer stand to be outdoors when he’s home because it’s always “too hot.”

When we first started seeing each other, he was fit and active. Now he comes home, eats and stares at his phone. He’s always unhappy with his weight, but when I ask him to please eat better, his response is, “Nothing makes me as happy as a cookie.” He would rather be a 500-pound blob who never had to move if it meant he could eat cake all day.

I feel he has chosen food over me. I’m only 27, and I know I’ll have to sleep alone for however long I’m with him. I don’t know if I can do that. I make an effort to maintain myself for him, but clearly, the favor isn’t returned. What are your thoughts?

WORRYING IN FLORIDA

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

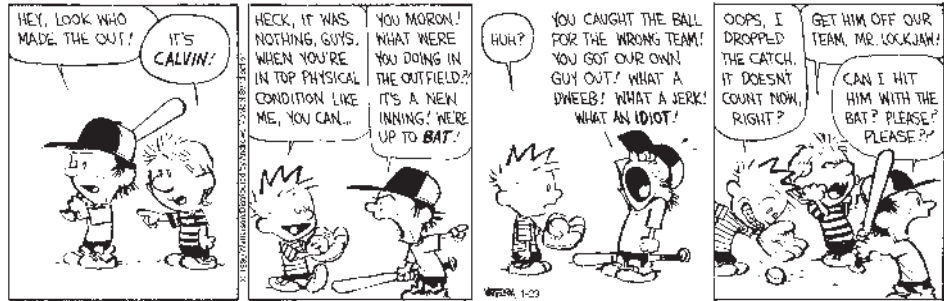


DEAR WORRYING: If nothing makes your boyfriend happier than eating a cookie, it’s time you got to the bottom of what is eating HIM. When a fit and active person suddenly loses interest in his health and becomes careless about his diet, one has to wonder if he may be using food to cope with painful or unpleasant emotions. Continue to help and support him as much as you can, but frankly, it may be time for the two of you to seek relationship counseling from a licensed mental health professional before your boyfriend’s diet causes permanent damage to his health.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order “How to Be Popular.” Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

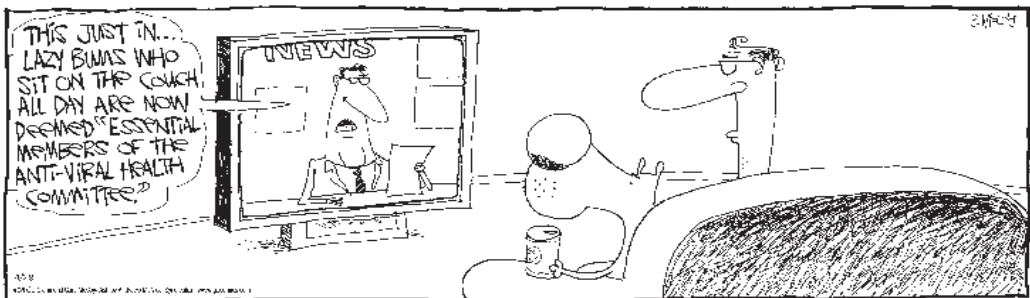


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS 41 Early Mongolian 43 Weaving frame 44 Decay 46 Partner of 50 Order to an outdoor-loving dog 55 A billion years 56 April forecast 57 Cupid's specialty 58 Hill dweller 59 Medieval letter 60 Troubles 61 "— a Rebel"

DOWN 1 Jupiter counter-part 2 Choir voices 3 Blueprint 4 Outcasts 5 Kimono sash 6 Assoc. 7 "Funny!" 8 Actor Kutcher 9 Grant's foe 10 TiVo precursor 11 Packed away 17 Sample 19 High card 22 Wimble-don divisions 23 Hiker's path 25 See socially 26 Always 27 Singer Lovett 28 Business attire 29 Hammett pooch 30 Champagne brand 31 Thus 35 Noisy sleepers 38 Leather-neck 40 Med. plar option 42 Harry Potter pal 45 Spring meltdown 47 "Amen!" 48 Ice cream holder 49 Tolkien creatures 50 Rover's warning 51 — Claire, Wis. 52 Can metal 53 Comic Philips 54 Caviar

Solution time: 23 mins.

Yesterday's answer 4-29

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Andre Agassi, 50; Uma Thurman, 50; Michelle Pfeiffer, 62; Jerry Seinfeld, 66.

Happy Birthday: Assess and reassess before making a decision. Too much, too quick and too time-consuming should all be considerations when thinking about what you want to accomplish this year. You are best to concentrate on what's reasonable and likely to bring a safe and beneficial return. Refuse to let someone take over or push you in a direction that is not suitable. Your numbers are 9, 11, 20, 26, 34, 38, 46.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Be creative. Use your skills differently. Spend less time talking about what you want to do and more on finishing what you start. Make physical improvements. Time spent with someone you love will lead to new developments.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Make a positive change at home that will encourage you to have more time to relax or spend time with your lover, family or friends. Someone you help will give you something unexpected in return. An opportunity will not turn out as planned.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Someone will mislead you if you are gullible. A business trip, educational pursuit or get-together with peers will prompt you to make a change. Consider your motives before you take action. Physical activity will help to de-stress.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Lend a helping hand, and you will make a difference. The decisions you make will have an impact on the way people view you. Creative

input and original ideas will help you advance. A personal contract looks promising.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Observe what others do, but don't follow them. Take care of your interests and health. Channel your energy, and make no mistake when it's time to make a decision. Being upfront about the way you feel will make a difference.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Someone you deal with has ulterior motives. It's OK to do for others, but don't become a martyr. Set boundaries, ask questions and honor promises. A positive change will encourage new beginnings. Rely on experience and learn from mistakes.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Watching documentaries about distant lands, taking online courses or being a part of something that matters is the right route for you. Express yourself through your actions, and minimize what isn't necessary. Concentrate on what matters most to you, and you will make a difference.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Refuse to let anger or frustration get to you. Separate yourself from the people who push your buttons. Look for opportunities, and stick to those who share your beliefs and concerns. A unique approach to life will lead to peace of mind.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Refuse to let your emotions take over when it comes to money, health and legal matters. Do what's right, stick to the truth and prepare to move along quickly. Treat yourself to something special, or take on a physical challenge that exhilarates you.

EUGENIA LAST THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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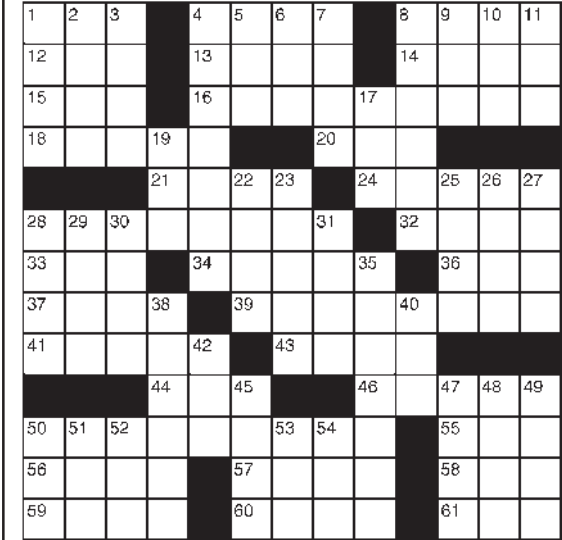
CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Put your plans in place. Do the work yourself, and reap the rewards. An emotional incident will bring you closer to someone you love. Don't dismiss an unusual or unexpected opportunity. A move or home improvement will lower your overhead.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Sit tight; if you make an abrupt move, you will miss an important detail. Don't argue with someone who is looking for a fight. Time is on your side, and concentrating on what you can accomplish will be in your best interest.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Get together with old friends. Use your experience to help you make a better decision regarding money, health or a legal situation. What you do to help others will reflect your reputation. Pay attention to detail.

Birthday Baby: You are optimistic, original and sensitive. You are intellectual and patient.

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STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

SUDOKU Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

Difficulty Level ★★★

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WONDERWORD By DAVID CUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

'A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD' (FILM) Sol.: 12 letters

I A M Y M M A T T E K N U L P S E H A R P S T E R A C Y I U L R S A N E K K A M E H S O P E D E Q O F R E D N T A N C P R N D G U N M J I O T N I I E A A C O O I E A R N E K V R T B S O R T R R O R E E S A N R B U L R R R D E N G P L G E I S A Y O O E N L N Y O L L E T I N L I L A O S L A L O E G H R T E W O R S Y L E Y L C O A H O E J R S T H H D I R I V L C N F G E C A R M E N R A B E D I C S H O W W E H T T A M Y R S M E V E I L E B E K A M

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Andrea, Bill, Care, Carmen, Chris, Colantoni, Cooper, Dorothy, Ears, Ellen, Enrico, Esquire, Fred, Gavin, Goal, Hanks, Harpster, Heller, Hero, Isler, Jerry, Joanne, Lahti, Lila, Lloyd, Lorraine, Make-believe, Makkena, Margy, Marielle, Maryann, Matthew, McFeely, Noah, Plunkett, Puppet, Rabbit, Rhys, Rogers, Show, Susan, Tammy, Todd, Vogel, Watson, Wendy

Yesterday's Answer: Rocker

Treasures 14, 15, 17, 18 and 21 through 39 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com.

Thomas reacts on ‘Jordan Rules,’ walk-off



NEW YORK—ESPN reached the “Bad Boys” Pistons-Bulls rivalry in Sunday night’s “The Last Dance,” and that has had one major consequence.

It’s time to re-litigate an entire generation of basketball and all the beef that came with it.

Among the highlights of the fourth episode of the “The Last Dance” was the debate over the Pistons’ decision to walk off the floor after getting swept by the Bulls in the 1991 Eastern Conference finals. Bulls big man Horace Grant called the team “straight up b---es” for the move.

Thomas rationalized the walk-off by saying it was normal at the time and something the vaunted Boston Celtics did when the Pistons beat them years earlier.

Jordan’s reaction to just hearing Thomas had told the producers something was Hall of Fame-level bitter.

“Whatever he says now, you know it wasn’t his true actions then,” Jordan said. “He has time enough to think about it. Or the reaction of the public has kinda changed his perspective of it. You can show me anything you want, there’s no way you can convince me he wasn’t an a--hole.”

Perhaps sensing the following Monday would be a good time to tell his side of the rivalry that suddenly has the NBA world talking again, Thomas appeared on ESPN’s “Get Up” to talk about a number of topics.

As portrayed in the documentary, the “Jordan Rules” was a defense used by the Pistons with a clearly desired

result: Jordan hitting the floor.

The Pistons weren’t subtle about how much they loved being the more physical team and the fact that they were the wall in front of Jordan. However, Thomas also added that he felt more punishment than anybody in that era when host Jalen Rose—wearing a Pistons shirt—talked about the physicality of the era.

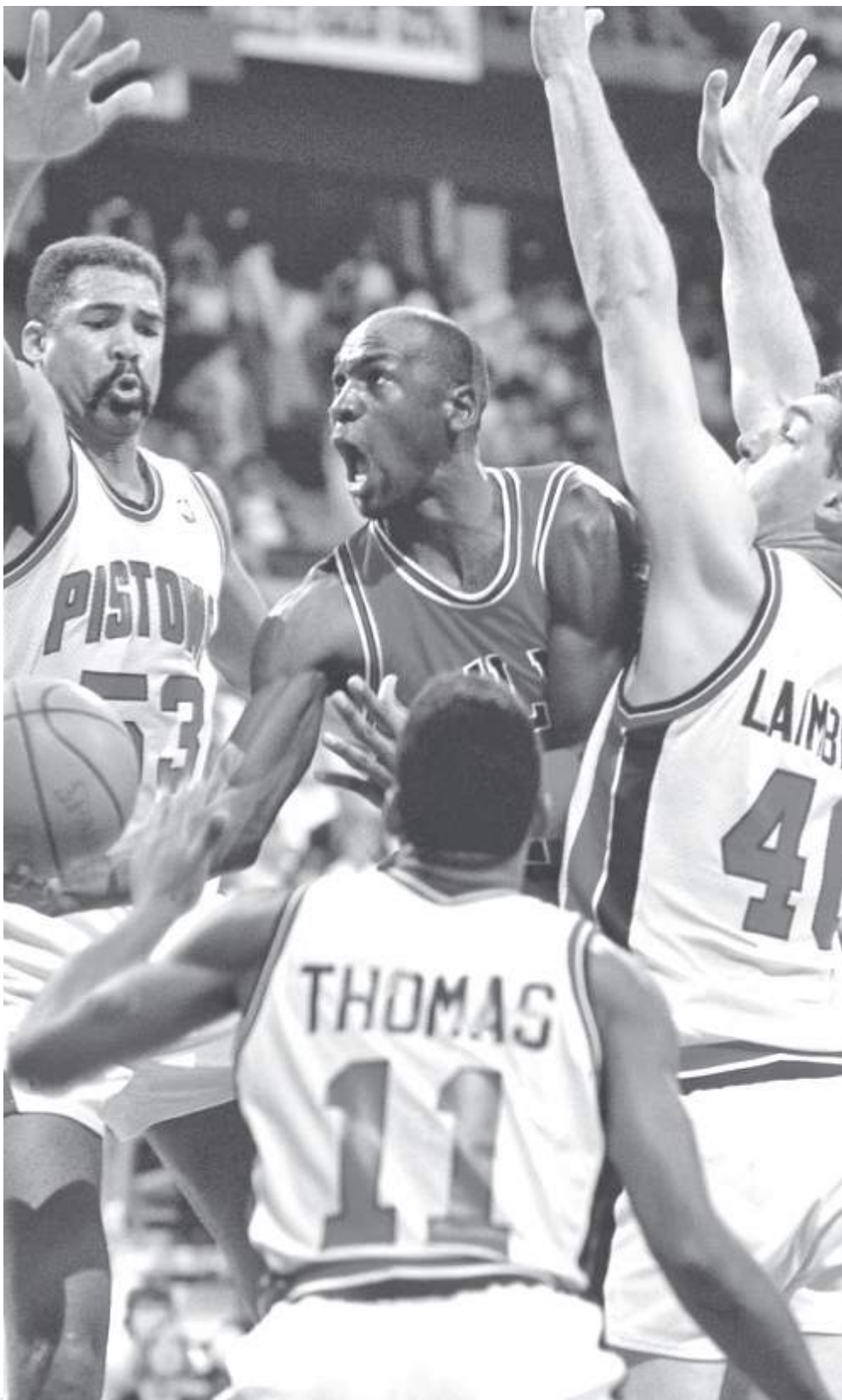
“This generation thinks that the only one getting hit back then was Jordan,” Thomas said. “I can say on this television station here today: there is no player during that period of time that got hit and punished more than myself. And I have all the scars to prove it.”

The documentary also portrayed Jordan and the Bulls’ intense offseason program in which the superstar significantly bulked up, leading to the aforementioned sweep of the Pistons in 1991.

Thomas wasn’t impressed.

“Jordan is, and the Chicago Bulls, they are rewarded for lifting weights, getting stronger, becoming mentally tougher,” Thomas said. “That’s what you’re supposed to do to win a championship. You were not going to beat the Detroit Pistons if you wasn’t physically fit, if you wasn’t in the best shape of your life and if you wasn’t mentally tough.”

“Chicago and Michael Jordan did and became all of those things. But while they were losing to us, they weren’t those things. Now, you shouldn’t be rewarded for lifting weights. We got high-school kids now lifting weights. Being physically fit and wanting to be in shape to get better, that’s part of becoming a champion. Again, to



AP
In this May 29, 1990 file photo, the Chicago Bulls’ Michael Jordan drives against the Detroit Pistons’ James Edwards, Isiah Thomas, and Bill Laimbeer in Game 4 of the NBA playoff game in Chicago.

Chicago’s credit, they did.

It’s kind of hard to decipher the point Thomas is trying to make there, given that he says the Bulls shouldn’t be credited for lifting weights, then credits them for becoming champions by, among other things, lifting weights.

Thomas also lamented being left off the Dream Team, a decision widely believed to be directly Jordan’s doing.

It’s not a surprise Thomas is trying to air all of this out. As Yahoo Sports’ Henry Bushnell explained, this entire documentary could end up being the defining text of a generation of basketball, and that might not be great for the rivals of the guy who has control over the entire process.

The “Bad Boys” Pistons weren’t just roadblocks for Jordan, they were a two-time world champion and icons for an entire city. Of course guys like Thomas and Bill Laimbeer—who also went on ESPN to call the Bulls “whiners”—are going to try to get their say.

“Why would I regret it now today? I don’t care what the media says about me. I never did. If I did, I’d be a basket case, especially back then. I was about winning basketball games and winning championships and did whatever I had to do to get the most out of my ability and our team—and we did. At the end of the day, we’re called world champions.”

MIAMI (AP)—The NBA has pushed back the possible reopening date of some team practice facilities for at least a week until May 8 at the earliest, saying Monday the extra time was needed in part to make sure player training options would be safe and controlled in an effort to try to mitigate the threats caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

And when those facilities reopen, the rules will be strict.

The May 8 date is far from firm, the NBA said, warning teams that it “may push this timing back if developments warrant.” The league planned on giving teams the option of reopening facilities as early as Friday, though ultimately decided more time was needed across the league for many reasons.

But whenever those practice courts open—local government clearance would be needed first in all cases—there will not be an

NBA pushes facilities reopening until May 8

immediate return to normal. A person with knowledge of the league’s plans said players would have to wear face masks inside facilities except when working out, that any staff members present would have to wear face masks and gloves, and that a minimum distance of 12 feet would be required as a buffer between players and staff members working with them.

The exception in that 12-foot case would be when medical or athletic training personnel are in contact with players. The person spoke to the The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the details were not publicly released.

There are numerous other details of the league’s facility-reopening protocols.

Players who return to their

home-team markets from out of town will have to quarantine before being allowed back in the facility.

All equipment used by players in their voluntary workouts, including basketballs, will have to be disinfected before being used again. Players will not be allowed to share towels, and teams will not be permitted to make steam rooms, saunas, cold tubs, oxygen chambers or cryotherapy chambers at the facilities available.

Teams will have to designate a staff member as a “Facility Hygiene Officer” to oversee all new policies. Players will have to enter the facility alone, without family members, friends or personal security.

All cell phones, keys and other often-touched items must be cleaned and disinfected

upon entry to the facility.

“Our foremost priority remains everyone’s health and well-being and we will continue to follow the NBA’s guidelines, while also continuing to listen to public health experts and observe local governmental directives,” Orlando Magic spokesman Joel Glass said.

When teams can reopen, other rules will include a limit of four players at a facility at any one time, no practices or scrimmages will be allowed, and no head coaches or assistant coaches can be part of the voluntary workouts.

NBA players are also still prohibited from working out at public health clubs, fitness centers, or gyms.

The NBA suspended the season March 11 after Rudy Gobert of the Utah Jazz was

the first player to test positive for COVID-19. It ordered teams to shutter their facilities eight days later, saying at the time it was doing so “in light of the rapidly-developing coronavirus situation, and consistent with evolving advice from health experts regarding how to promote individual and public health while minimizing the spread of the virus.”

Facilities have not been opened since, and this step—when it happens—does not mean a return to NBA play is imminent. NBA Commissioner Adam Silver has said repeatedly that he does not believe the league will be in position to make any decision on whether the season can resume until sometime in May, at the earliest.

“There’s too much un-

known to set a timeline, even too much unknown to say, ‘Here are the precise variables,’ Silver said on April 17.

The push toward reopening facilities started after certain states and municipalities began loosening restrictions on personal movement. Georgia and Oklahoma are among the states that have already allowed some businesses to reopen and Florida’s two most populous counties, Miami-Dade and Broward, announced plans Monday to loosen some of their stay-at-home policies starting later this week.

Johns Hopkins University, which tracks the amount of cases and deaths based on figures revealed by governments around the world, showed Monday that the U.S. count was nearing 1 million confirmed cases. More than 55,000 people in the U.S. have died because of the virus.

AFC North has new look; Ravens still team to beat



NEW YORK (AP)—Following a season in which Lamar Jackson and the

Baltimore Ravens ran away with the AFC North title, the rest of the division has been working diligently to narrow the gap.

The Ravens, however, show no signs of slowing down.

After a whirlwind of free agent signings and the NFL draft, the AFC North has a decidedly different look.

Cincinnati has essentially handed the reins of the offense to LSU quarterback Joe Burrow, the top pick in the draft.

Ben Roethlisberger is poised to return to the Steelers after missing the final 14 games in 2019.

Cleveland is counting on a new general manager, a first-year coach and an improved offensive line to rescue the long suffering franchise.

The chase is on, but Baltimore might be tougher to take down than Jackson in an open field.

The Ravens didn't stand pat after a 14-2 season in which they easily won the AFC North over a trio of sputtering pursuers that failed to achieve a winning record.

"We got better as a football team," general manager Eric DeCosta declared after a draft in which the Ravens snagged 10 players, most notably LSU linebacker Patrick Queen and Ohio State running back J.K. Dobbins.

Dobbins joins an offense that led the league in scoring and set an NFL record with 3,296 yards rushing. In his first full season as a starter, Jackson ran for 1,206 yards—most ever by a quarterback—and threw 36 touchdown passes before being selected NFL MVP by a unanimous vote.

DeCosta improved Baltimore's defensive front by obtaining Calais Campbell in a trade with Jacksonville and signing free agent Derek Wolfe.

Queen and third-round pick Malik Harrison are poised to fill the void at middle linebacker and the secondary returns Pro Bowl selections Earl Thomas, Marcus Peters and Marlon Humphrey.

The offense lost eight-time Pro Bowl guard Marshal Yanda to retirement, but DeCosta drafted a pair of linemen as potential replacements.

A two-win Bengals team used the offseason to make a clean break heading into coach Zac Taylor's second year, tearing up the foundation.

They made Burrow the new face of the franchise as Andy Dalton's replacement. They also took receiver Tee Hig-



In this Dec. 29, 2019 file photo, the Baltimore Ravens and Pittsburgh Steelers are in action during the first half of an NFL game in Baltimore.

gins, who grew up modeling his game after Cincinnati's A.J. Green and is now in line to replace him down the line.

The Bengals scored the third-fewest points in the NFL last season and ought to at least be more interesting in

Burrow's first go-around.

Cincinnati fortified the defense through free agency, bringing in three cornerbacks,

a safety, a linebacker and a tackle.

The Steelers' biggest offseason move centered not on

the draft or free agency but the continued rehab of Roethlisberger's right elbow.

The team is betting heavily that the 38-year-old Roethlisberger can return to form in 2020, and they tried to help him along by grabbing a couple of big targets to punch up an offense that sputtered in his absence.

Notre Dame wide receiver Chase Claypool (6-foot-4) is the cornerstone of the draft class and tight end Eric Ebron (also 6-4) signed a two-year deal looking for a chance to get his career back on track following an injury-marred 2019 in Indianapolis.

Pittsburgh also signed outside linebacker Bud Dupree to a one-year franchise tender with the hopes of keeping him long term. Dupree and All-Pro T.J. Watt formed one of the league's top pass-rush tandems last season. They'll need to do it again if the Steelers have any chance of keeping up in a division featuring three Heisman Trophy quarterbacks, all 25 or younger.

Like last year, the Browns seem to be winning the offseason. That doesn't guarantee there will be a winning carryover.

First-time general manager Andrew Berry stuffed some major holes in Cleveland's roster with free agent signings and astute draft picks. The erratic, inconsistent play at both tackle spots was a major issue last season, in part leading to a drop-off in the play of second-year quarterback Baker Mayfield.

Free agent RT Jack Conklin was signed to a three-year, \$42 million contract, and the Browns grabbed Alabama standout Jedrick Wills with the No. 10 overall pick to play on the left side. The hope is the newcomers will protect Mayfield, open holes for running back Nick Chubb and give first-year coach Kevin Stefanski's offense a chance to flourish.

The secondary could be special if LSU safety Grant Delpit can step in right away. The loss of veteran linebackers Joe Schobert and Christian Kirksey has left a vacuum, but the Browns added depth up front in free agent tackle Andrew Billings and end Adrian Clayborn.

The coronavirus pandemic has delayed Stefanski from seeing what he's got on the field, and the interruption could be costly for a young team still trying to find its way.

Chiefs add speedsters to defense to balance blazing offense

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—The Kansas City Chiefs won their first Super Bowl in 50 years thanks in large part to their blazing speed on offense.

They spent the past week-end getting their defense up to speed, too.

The Chiefs only had five scheduled picks—they traded back into the draft to pick up a sixth—and made a point of using their choices to prioritize speed and athleticism. Second-round pick Willie Gay Jr. ran the second-fastest 40-yard dash among linebackers at the NFL scouting combine, and fourth-round pick L'Jarius Sneed not only had the fastest time among safeties at 4.37 seconds but the fourth-fastest of any player that ran during the week in Indianapolis.

The run on speed even continued after the draft. The Chiefs signed five defensive backs and two linebackers as undrafted free agents, and one of them—Auburn's Javaris Davis—had the combine's second-fastest 40 time among cornerbacks.

"It's certainly how those positions are played nowa-

days," Chiefs general manager Brett Veach said. "When you have guys that test extremely well and perform at the combine, or if they had pro days, those guys are certainly going to be—if you didn't like them on tape, those guys are the ones that are going to get second and third looks."

That was certainly the case with Gay, Sneed and seventh-round pick Thakarius Keyes. Gay only played a handful of games last season because of off-the-field issues while Sneed (Louisiana Tech) and Keyes (Tulane) mostly played cornerback against lesser competition, leaving all of them with a dearth of quality game film.

The speed they showed during the scouting combine wound up validating the looks the Chiefs did manage to get.

"When you see their performances on tape, you get even more excited," Veach said. "We certainly want to target guys that test well, but they don't just test well. They're football players that test well. Not testers that play football."

Of course, straight-line speed is one thing. But what

gets Chiefs coach Andy Reid most excited about the fresh faces on his defense is that they play fast. They also have the burst, agility and quickness necessary in the modern NFL.

"We kind of have to formulate it and make sure we have the best group that can go in there and dominate on game day," Reid said. "Brett worked that whole thing and did it to perfection, and as you watch it, you're able to go back and look at this guy and go, 'OK, you could use this and you could use that.' But these kids just jump off the screen at you."

There is another reason the Chiefs wanted to get faster on defense: Every team in the AFC West spent the draft trying to catch them on offense, and that means more pressure on their defense when the play them six times each season.

Raiders general manager Mike Mayock acknowledged that was the case when they chose Alabama wide receiver Henry Ruggs III, the fastest player at the scouting combine with a 4.27-second 40-yard dash, with the 12th overall pick. They also added

Kentucky wide receiver Lynn Bowden and South Carolina's Bryan Edwards among the first three rounds.

The Chargers added Virginia's Joe Reid, another wide receiver with a sub-4.4-second 40, while the Broncos used their first-round pick on Alabama wide receiver Jerry Jeudy (4.45) and their fourth-round selection on Missouri's Albert Okwuegbunam, who had the combine's fastest 40 among tight ends at 4.49 seconds.

"We like guys, certainly in our scheme, that have some length and can run," Veach said. "If we had the first pick in Round 4 it would have been Sneed, so we were certainly holding our breath there. Our guys did a good job of helping me be patient and work through this, because letting the board play itself out and getting Sneed there at the bottom of four there certainly enabled us to use the other equity to go up and get Keyes (in the seventh round)."

Veach said the Chiefs had a fifth-round grade on him, making it good value to trade a sixth-rounder next year to get him.

MLB teams adjusting draft preparations



DETROIT (AP)—The Detroit Tigers can feel certain about one thing: They have the No. 1 pick in the draft.

What that Major League Baseball draft will look like, when and where it will take place and how the selections will be made, still isn't clear.

"It's going to present different challenges, probably," said Scott Pleis, Detroit's director of amateur scouting. "It's just going to be different. It's not going to affect the outcome, it'll just be a different way of coming to that outcome."

The NFL experienced that

last week because of the coronavirus pandemic, conducting a remote draft with video screens, Zoom chats and other tech innovations that made the event popular with fans.

Normally, the college baseball season would be in full swing right now, giving major league teams a chance to monitor top prospects in the weeks leading up to the draft. But with college and high school games shelved because of the virus outbreak, front offices can only do so much in what is clearly an abnormal year.

Every team faces similar obstacles.

"The challenges have been that they stopped playing

baseball about six weeks into the spring season," Washington Nationals general manager Mike Rizzo said. "So that's been the biggest hurdle that we had to face. Fortunately, we dive into this draft thing very, very seriously. We got a lot done early on, especially the higher-round type of premier prospects. We have a really good feel of what's out there in the country."

Last month's deal between MLB and the players' union paved the way for changes to the draft, which was set to be held June 10-12 in Omaha, Nebraska, in conjunction with the College World Series.

Under the agreement, obtained by The Associated Press, MLB has the right to delay the dates of the 2020 and 2021 drafts to as late as July 20, and MLB may reduce rounds from 40 to five in 2020 and to 20 in 2021.

Signing bonuses may be deferred, and signing bonuses for undrafted players subject to the draft will be

capped at \$20,000.

If the draft were shortened all the way to five rounds, that would be no small thing. From 2006-2010—a five-year sample of players who have had plenty of time to contribute—the first five rounds of the draft produced a total of 2,203.5 wins above replacement, according to figures from Baseball-Reference.com. Rounds 6-40 produced 961.9 WAR (players who were drafted but didn't sign aren't included in those totals).

Although the bulk of the value is clearly concentrated in the first few rounds, players taken in the sixth round or later can and do go on to productive big league careers -- two-time NL Cy Young Award winner Jacob deGrom notably was a ninth-round pick by the Mets in 2010.

This year, the market of undrafted players could be crucial.

"We're going to prepare for, really almost like we prepared for 40 rounds," Pleis said. "We're going to go through

them all, we're going to rank them like we've always ranked them."

College programs could reap the benefits of both a shortened draft and the cap on signing bonuses for undrafted players. There may be less incentive for prospects to leave school with eligibility remaining.

The uncertainty about the minor league season this year—and even the college season next year—could also make for some tricky decisions.

Will there be a place to play whether a prospect decides to go or stay?

"I think there's a host of information that you'd want to know, and then that's really where I think the clubs can differentiate themselves," Texas Rangers GM Jon Daniels said.

"I think that's what we're going to be focused on, demonstrating to players, demonstrating to parents, demonstrating to coaches, and people

that care about these players, that we're going to go above and beyond in taking care of our people and developing our players on and off the field," he said.

Shane Farrell, amateur scouting director for the Toronto Blue Jays, said social distancing has certainly created a different routine for scouts.

"To tell a scout he's got to spend Friday night at home in March, April and May, that's just something we're not accustomed to," he said. "We are spending a ton of time on the phone communicating, whether it's through phone calls or texts."

Pleis said his team has plenty of video it can use to evaluate players. The obvious problem is that some prospects could have taken a step forward or backward this year. Now they don't have the chance to show that.

It's an issue particularly for high school players whose bodies can change significantly from one season to the next.

SWIM

From Page 20

lacios of SSC made on May 8, 1994.

Maria, on the other hand, earned her first age group mark (7 to 8 years old) after clocking in at 48.71 seconds in the 50m breaststroke. She

crushed the 49.27 seconds her fellow Tsunami Saipan swimmer Nanaka Watanabe registered on May 30, 2015.

Meanwhile, with the Marpi pool still closed and the CNMI battling the COVID-19 pandemic, Tsunami Saipan swimmers are doing land training at their respective homes to stay fit.

GAME

From Page 20

ber Yasuhiro Endo.

"I chose Endo because his PK success rate is 88% (Cristiano Ronaldo is 83.8%) and he is a very experienced player, having played in many big matches. He would not miss in this big chance," Mita said.

MP United technical director Norman Del Rosario's choice for the PK taker has a better success rate than Endo. Del Rosario selected former Liverpool star and United Kingdom player Steven Gerrard.

"Gerrard had an impressive penalty record, as he scored 24 times from the spot and his conversion rate happens to be 92%. He absolutely loves hitting the top corner of the net with his greatest strength being the ability to generate serious pace while striking the ball," Del Rosario said.

On defense, the MP United official will pin his hopes on former Ukraine national team member Oleksandr Shovkovskiy.

In a shootout against Switzerland in the 2006 World Cup, Shovkovskiy did not allow a shot, helping Ukraine advance to the quarterfinals. Shovkovskiy previously held the Ukraine national team record in minutes played (728) without yielding a goal.

Sunjoon Tenorio—himself a go-to-guy for the CNMI national team—is tabbing his favorite player to hit the dagger.

"Neymar, my favorite player and one of the best penalty takers in the world. He actually has been in that similar situation during the 2016 Olympics," Tenorio said.



Buffon

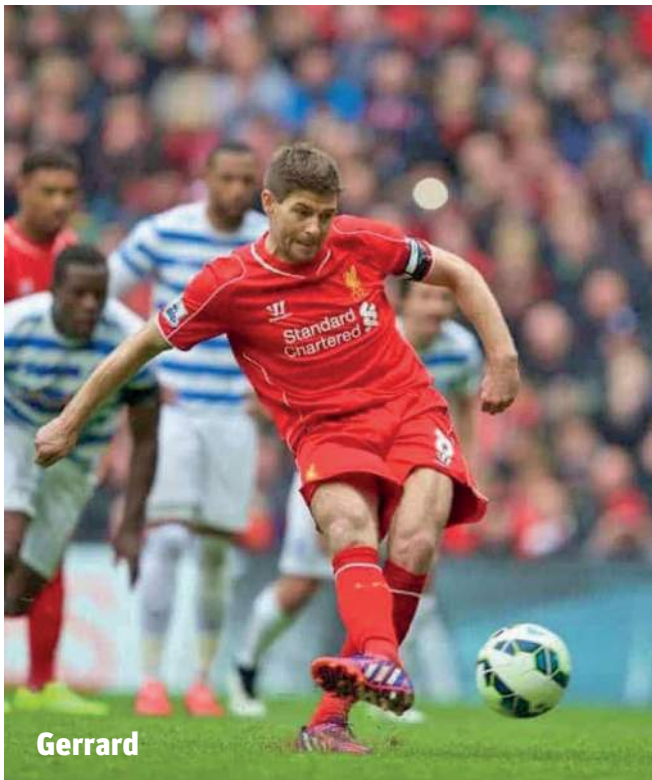
The Brazilian phenomenon's penalty shot lifted Brazil to a 5-4 victory over Germany in the gold medal match in the 2016 Olympic Games. He was in the Top 15 in Europe's best PK takers in 2017 and this season has a success rate of 61%.

For his goalie, Tenorio selected Newcastle United legend and the Netherlands' Tim Krul.

"He isn't very well known, but is a hero for me growing up as a Newcastle fan. He saved many penalties, including a shootout win in the 2014 World Cup," Tenorio said.

Meanwhile, Brad Ruszala, a former member of the CNMI Men's National Team, requested that he name a player on island for the PK, but eventually selected six-time FIFA Player of the Year Lionel Messi.

"Lionel Messi would be my choice for our fifth PK. For an off-island guy, he's kind of a combination of former CNMI players. He's got the moves of Joe Miller, the shot of Nick Swaim, and the beard of Steve



Gerrard

McKagan," Ruszala said.

"For CNMI keeper, I'd go with Gianluigi Buffon. He's awesome and he's 42 years old. Maybe I'm biased because I play for the M-

League's awesome old guys team. Maybe it's because the CNMI's first team was made up of a bunch of cagey veterans. Either way, he's our guy," he added.



Messi



Neymar



Thomas
reacts on
'Jordan Rules,'
walk-off

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune Sports

AFC North
has new look;
Ravens still
team to beat

PAGE 18



20 WEDNESDAY, APRIL 29, 2020

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Game time decision

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

It's the Marianas Cup, the CNMI and Guam are in a deadlock, 4-4, with the opposing teams left with only one player to take the game winner in the shootout. Who will be your shooter? Your goalkeeper?



Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan will put his money on Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes and former U.S. Men's National Team goalie Tim Howard.

"I think since playing for Manchester United, Fernandes hasn't missed a penalty shot," said Tan when asked to name an international or professional player that he would want to take the pressure-packed shot for the CNMI.

The Man United transferee (from Sporting CP) did hit three penalty shots this season and has a conver-



Left photo shows Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes taking the penalty shot in one of their games in the Premier League last February. Right file photo has Tim Howard going for the save for the U.S. Men's National Team's game in the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. AP



sion rate of 91 percent in 23 career attempts as of February this year. In fact, he missed only two spot-kicks since turning pro in 2013. His im-

pressive performance with Manchester United in February earned him the Premier League Player of the Month honors.

Tan also loves how the Portugal national player takes his shot and tricks the opposing team's goalie. It's not your straight up kick, as Fer-

nandes does the hop, skip, and jump penalty technique.

As for his choice for goalie, Tan believes Howard is the best keeper of the USMNT. The NMIFA head remembered how the now retired goalie was lauded in Brazil during the 2014 World Cup when he set the new record for most saves (16 versus Belgium) in the quadrennial event. Howard's fete was celebrated that much that Wikipedia "reported" he was named secretary of defense of the U.S. after the record save.

Juventus keeper Gianluigi Buffon is also a record-holder (longest streak without conceding a goal in Serie A history—over 12 league matches) and NMIFA technical director and CNMI Men's National team coach Michiteru Mita, if given a chance, will put the Italian to the post to defend against the money shot.

"He is a legend and the most experienced guy in international football. He is already past his peak to play a 90-minute game, but he is still good enough to play this PK," Mita said.

The 42-year-old started playing for Italian national team (youth and men's) since 1993, making him the most capped in the country's football history after representing the Italians 176 times.

As for the PK shooter, Mita picked former Japanese national team mem-

See GAME on Page 19

Swim records fall

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

No. The Kan Pacific Swimming

Pool did not reopen and hosted a tournament.

The records were made on this day in 2017 with Swimming Center

Tsunami Saipan's Nelson and Maria Bataliones, Ashley Dangol, Isaiah Aleksenko, and Juhn Tenorio competing in the 2017 SSC Sak Spring Meet held at the now closed Marpi facility.



The then 12-year-old Tenorio timed in at 31.71 seconds in the boys 11 to 12's 50m butterfly to shatter the 31.79 seconds Saipan Swim Club's Joshua Taitaino logged on May 6, 1994.

In the 9 to 10 races, Dangol clocked in at 2:44.86 in the 200m backstroke event to top the mark of former Tsunami Saipan swimmer Miku Tammy, who tallied 2:49.27 on Jan. 13, 2013. In the 200m backstroke, the then 9-year-old Aleksenko posted 2:50.37 to break the 2:50.95 set by Kaito Yanai of Tsunami Saipan on April 9, 2010.

Meanwhile, Nelson Batallones made it to the CNMI record books (boys 13 to 14 age group) for the first time in 2017 after completing the 200m butterfly event in 2:33.66. He eclipsed the 2:34.65 David Pa-

See SWIM on Page 19



CPNTRIBUTED PHOTO
In this April 29, 2017 file photo, Nelson Batallones competes in the 200m butterfly event in the 2017 SSC Sak Spring Meet held at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.